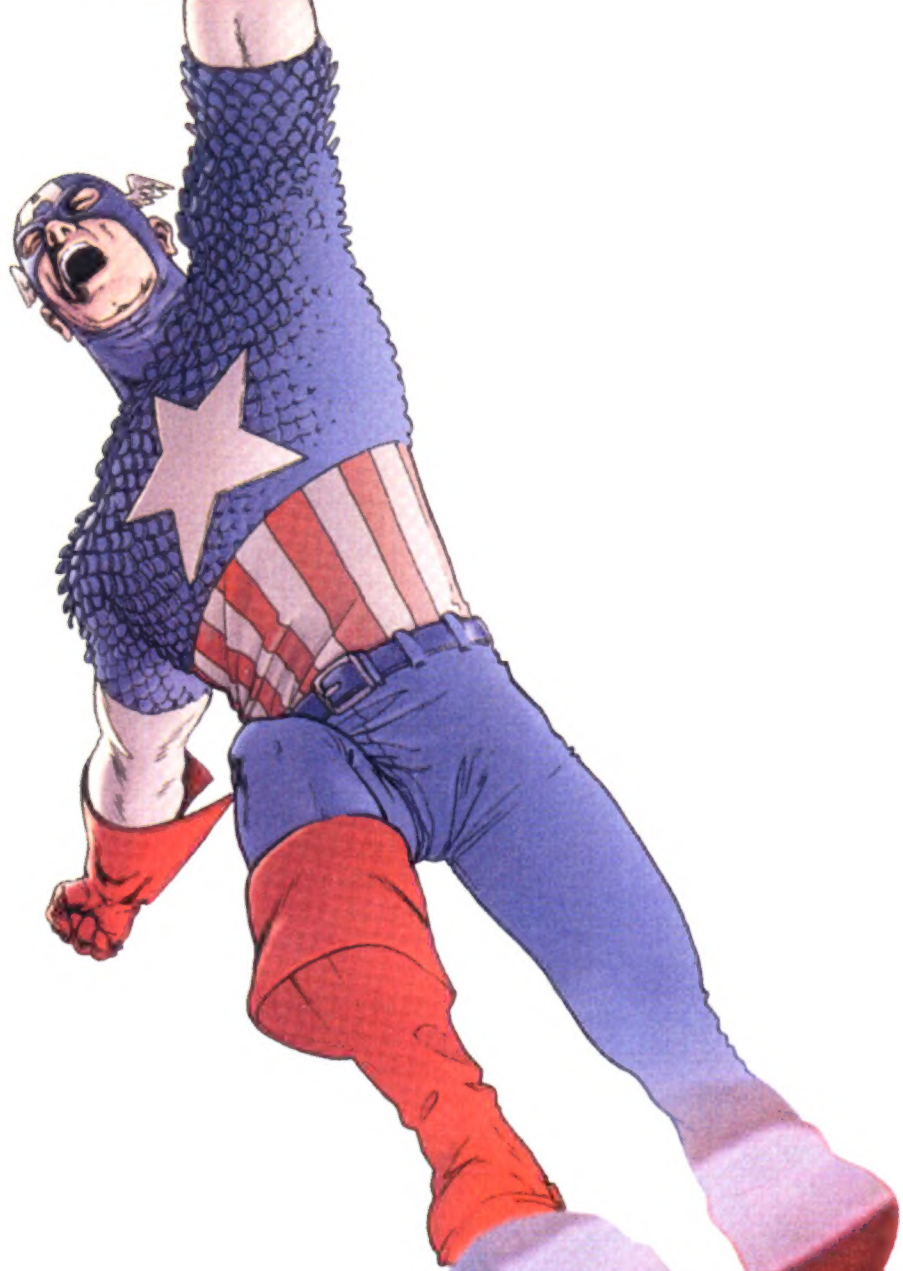


CBM Celebrates Patriotism!

COMIC BOOK

MARVACE

No. 90
Apr 2002



**INTERVIEW
WITH
BOB
LUBBERS!**

\$5.95 U.S./\$8.95 Can.
GEMSTONE PUBLISHING
ARTWORK © MARVEL CHARACTERS

CBM Celebrates Patriotism!

COMIC BOOK

 MARKET

No. 90
Apr 2002



**INTERVIEW
WITH
BOB
LUBBERS!**

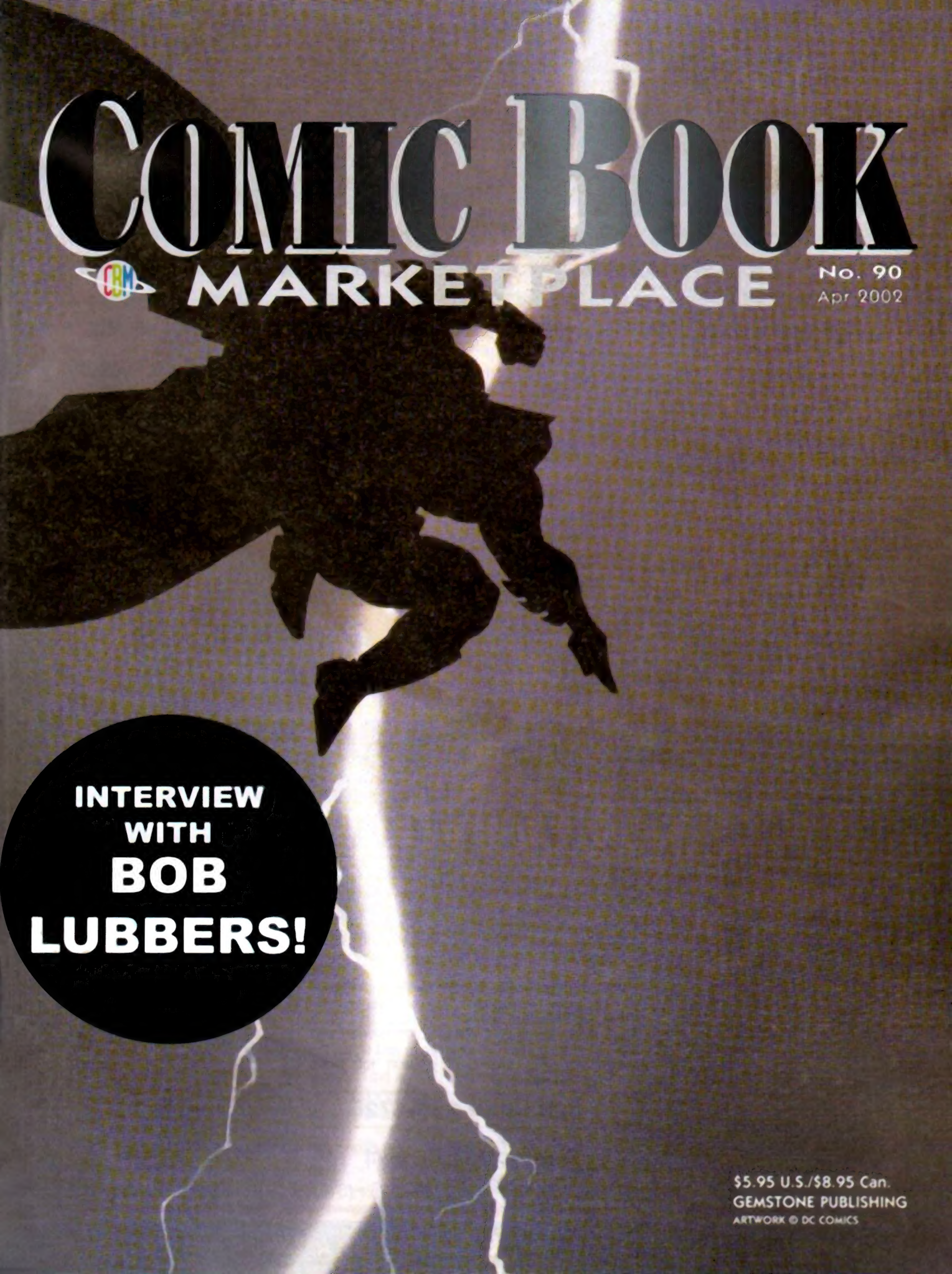
\$5.95 U.S./\$8.95 Can.
GEMSTONE PUBLISHING
ARTWORK © DC COMICS

COMIC BOOK



MARKETPLACE

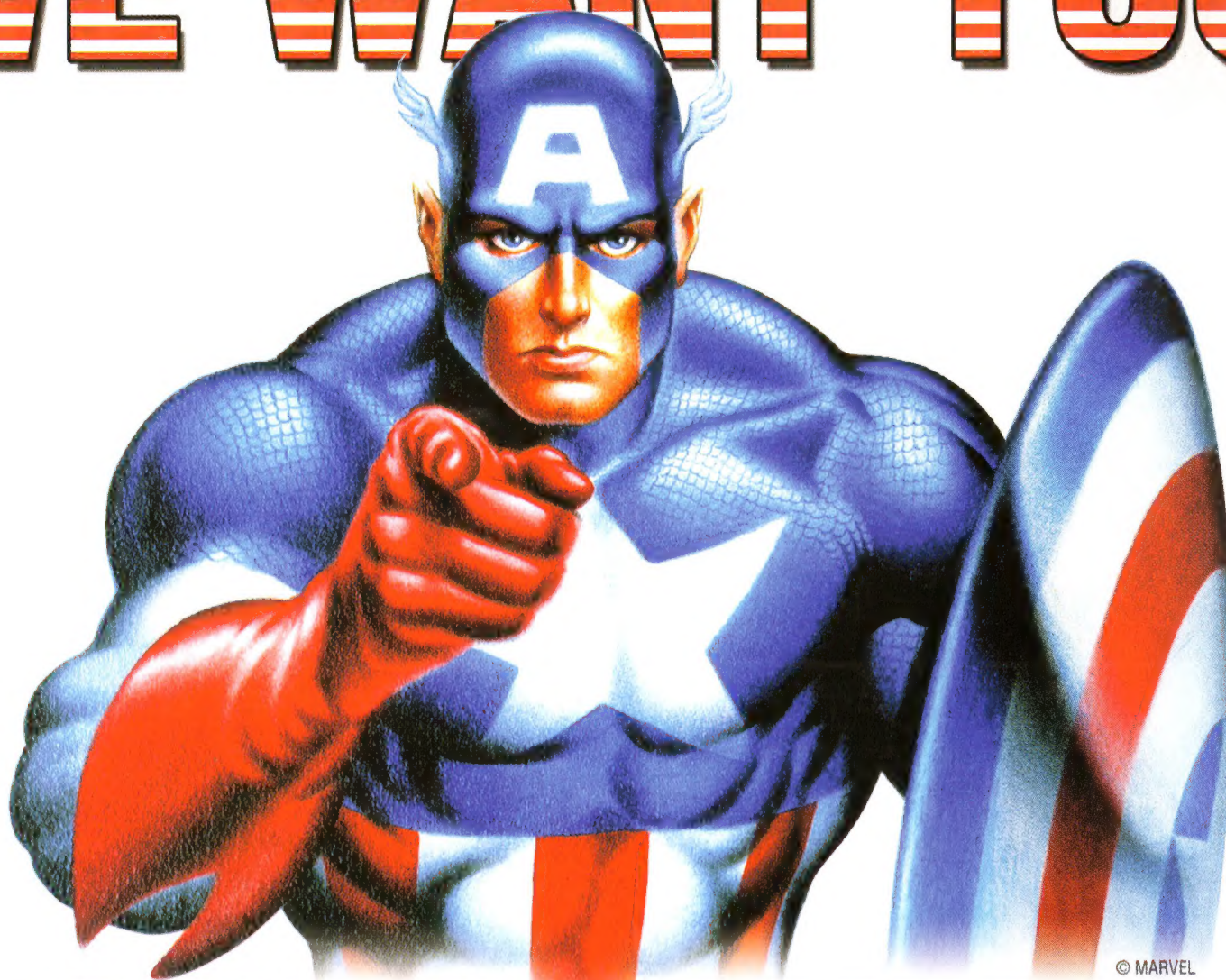
No. 90
Apr 2002



**INTERVIEW
WITH
BOB
LUBBERS!**

\$5.95 U.S./\$8.95 Can.
GEMSTONE PUBLISHING
ARTWORK © DC COMICS

WE WANT YOU



© MARVEL

LEGENDS of AMERICA AUCTION

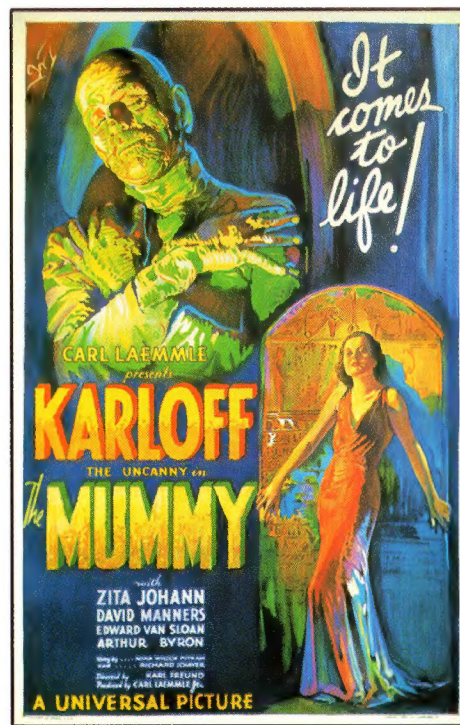


Coming in May of 2002, Jay Parrino's The Mint will be offering some of the Very Fine Collectibles in the marketplace today including: Golden-Age Comics, Silver-Age Comics, Bronze-Age Comics, Original Comic Book Artwork, Vintage Movie Posters, Gem Currency and Rare Coins.

We are always looking for quality items to place in our upcoming retail and auction catalogs. Whether you are looking to buy, sell or consign, give us a call today. Come deal with the professionals who have over 50 years of experience and share the same undying love and passion for these American Treasures.

Call (800) 280-4726

Jay Parrino's The Mint

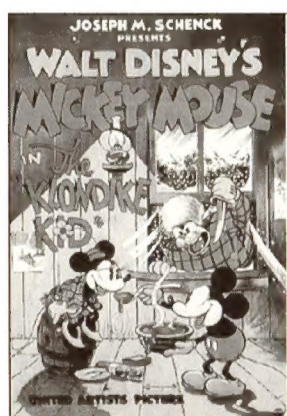


Post Office Drawer 9326 • Kansas City, MO 64133 • (800) 280-4726 • (816) 373-7744 Fax • JayParrino.com

HERITAGE COMICS

GREAT STUFF... GREAT RESULTS

Over \$2.6 million worth of fabulous comics, original art and movie posters sold in Dallas, Texas during the Second Heritage Signature Auction March 15 & 16, 2002. No previous auction of comics, comics art and/or movie posters had ever broken the \$2 million barrier. Here are just a few of the record-breaking highlights!

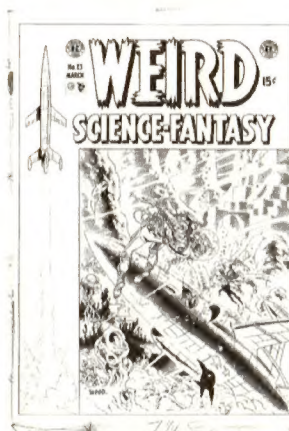


The Klondike Kid
1-sheet – Sold for
\$42,550!



King Kong Style "A"
1-sheet – Sold for
\$78,200

Wally Wood
Weird-Science
Fantasy #23 cover art
– Sold for
\$21,850



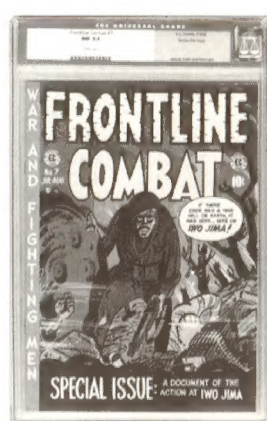
Amazing Spider-Man
#83 (Oakland copy),
CGC 9.8 – Sold for
\$1,782.50
(35 times Guide!)



Frank Frazetta's Famous
Funnies #213 cover art –
Sold for
\$100,625!

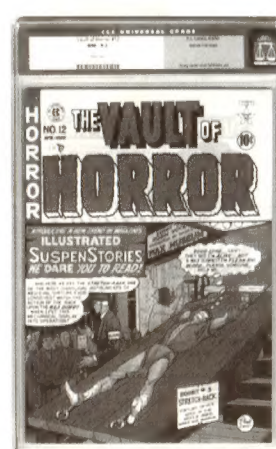


Hal Foster Tarzan
Sunday – Sold for
\$23,000!



Vault of Horror #12 (Gaines
File), CGC 9.8 – Sold for
\$29,900
(over 6 times Guide!)

Frontline Combat #7,
CGC 9.4 – Sold for
\$3,105
(over 15 times Guide!)



Red Dust
1-sheet – Sold for
\$14,375!

For more information about these rare gems and other great material, or to search our Permanent Auction Results Archive, log on to www.HeritageComics.com and join our free e-mail club.

Currently seeking choice consignments. If you need money now, generous cash advances are always available. To find out more about selling or consigning your posters or comics to Heritage, please visit www.HeritageComics.com/auctions/consigning.asp or contact:



John Petty
Director
214-252-4392
JPetty@HeritageComics.com



Jeff Smith
Assistant Director
214-252-4232
JSmith@HeritageComics.com



Grey Smith
Movie Posters Expert
214-668-6928
GreySm@HeritageComics.com

To order our next three Signature catalogs, send \$50 (fully refundable with your first purchase – MasterCard and Visa orders accepted by email) t

HERITAGE COMICS

100 Highland Park Village • Second Floor
Dallas, Texas 75205
Phone 214-528-3500/800-872-6467
Auctions@HeritageComics.com
www.HeritageComics.com



C O N T E N T S

NUMBER

2002



TM© MARVEL CHARACTERS



© 2002 DC COMICS



FEATURES

- Mystery of the Missing Super Teams!**
They Answered Their Country's Call—But Only Once! by Jeff Gelb 16
- Quit Blaming Frank Miller?!?**
And, for What?!? by J.C. Vaughn 20
- Bob Lubbers Interview!**
What DIDN'T He Do?! by Alberto Becattini 24
- Voices of Patriotism?!**
A CBM Quick Survey! by J.C. Vaughn 35
- George Perez Interview!**
Part Three of Three! by Bill Baker 45

COLUMNS

- Adventures Into Weird Words**
Double Artists! by Pat S. Calhoun 9
- Nolan's Notebook**
Fiction House's Four-Issue Wonders! by Michelle Nolan 12
- Oddball Comics**
Sparkling, Yet Sleazy! Scott Shaw! 50
- Funnies Farrago**
Adieu to Modesty! by R.C. Harvey 51
- The Naiman Report**
Pedigrees, Variants, Dennis and UGs! by Michael Naiman 71
- CBM MarketWatch and Market Reports**
Sampling marketplace indicator sales! Compiled by Michael Naiman 72
- The Deal of the Art**
Long Live Jack "King" Kirby! by Chris Boyko 77

DEPARTMENTS

Inspiration Central: About

Murphy Anderson part 1 . . .	18
Advertising & Subs	55
Greatest Comic Book Ever .	56
New and Noteworthy	58
Collectable Character	
Statues	62
Classic Comic Characters . .	64
Comics2Film	68

ABOUT THE COVERS:

Cover A - Captain America cover by John Cassaday, a Marvel Comics promotional piece © Marvel Characters. Cover B - Superman cover by Ed McGuinness, an interior shot from Superman #175 © DC Comics. Cover C - Dark Knight cover by Frank Miller from Batman: The Dark Knight Returns #1 © DC Comics. Special thanks to Bill Rosemann at Marvel, and Patty Jeres & Adam Philips at DC for the covers. Other art © and ™ respective Copyright holders. All rights reserved.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Comic Book Marketplace - Gemstone Publishing, Inc. copyright ©2002 Stephen A. Geppi, all rights reserved under international and Pan-American copyright conventions. The information in this publication is protected under U.S. copyright law. Absolutely no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form whatsoever (including mechanically, photographically, and/or electronically), without the prior written consent of the publisher. All articles and columns are the express opinion of the individual contributing artists and authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Gemstone Publishing, Comic Book Marketplace, its staff, or its advertisers. All characters, names, logos, trademarks, and symbols depicted and/or described in articles and other editorial material are owned and copyrighted by their individual companies. Inquiries regarding **advertising** should be addressed to: telephone (888) 375-9800, ext. 249 or ext. 413. Inquiries regarding this **publication** and letters to the editor should be addressed to: Comic Book Marketplace, c/o Gemstone Publishing, Inc. (Missouri), PO Box 469, West Plains, MO 65775-0469, telephone (417) 256-2224 FAX (417) 256-5555. 1st class subscription: \$60 (residents of Missouri and Maryland add applicable sales tax); \$62 (Canada and Mexico, US funds); \$110 (United Kingdom and Western Europe, US funds); \$120 (Japan and Philippines, US funds). Advertising and subscription rates may change without notice.

Issue Number 90, April 2002



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Having just returned from a weekend in Dallas for the Heritage Auction of March 15 and 16, the freshest thought on my mind is how the method of selling comic books, original art and movie posters has changed over the years. It has been quite an evolution, and here's the way it appears to me:

When I first got interested in collecting comics around 1964 (the same year I got my PhD and started professing and had a little spare time to cultivate a hobby), as a new collector there were basically two avenues open for me to try to build my collection—through the mail and at conventions. My first acquisitions were made by writing other collectors; guys like Roger Hill in Wichita and Don Lineberger in Valdosta, Georgia. Through reading the early 1962-1964 Ace paperback Burroughs novels (with those wonderful Frazetta covers!), I learned of Camille Cazedessus and his fanzine *ERB-DOM*, and became a subscriber, where I was led to book stores like Malcolm Willits' Collectors Book Store in Hollywood and the Able-Man Book Store in Michigan (Tom Altshuler). I recall a time when I would send \$100 to Able-Man Book Store and in return Tom would send me 100 different EC comics. Those were the days! I became condition-conscious for the first time and started upgrading the condition of my ECs this way.

When I started collecting original art, all I could find were lists. These lists, from Jim Ivey in Florida or Fred Schreiber in New York, would simply say, for example, "1944 Hogarth *Tarzan* original, \$35." No picture. No clue as to the contents of the art, what characters were there, what was going on. I filled this hole by publishing the first issue of *Graphic Gallery* in 1973, the first catalog for original art collectors which actually pictured all of the originals for sale.

Conventions were bigger and better than ever, and I usually drove to Phil Seuling's New York Comic Con in July, the Chicago Comic Con, conventions in Oklahoma City, Dallas, and Houston and even far-away San Diego. These were the places to go to see art and comics, and collectors like me would hoard their funds for months in anticipation of the feeding frenzy at these conventions. Alan Light's *Buyer's Guide* became a constant mail-order source between conventions.

Then, in the mid 1980s, auction houses like Sotheby's and Christie's got wind of the prices of rare comics and art and started their own auctions, and once or twice a year we'd all gather in New York for another feast. Conventions started dying out.

And then came the Internet, and eBay. No longer does a collector have to wait to go to a convention, or wait for an issue of the *Buyer's Guide* or *Graphic Gallery* (which was eventually renamed *Russ Cochran's Comic Art Auction*). Just click on your computer and there it is—loads of stuff right there, waiting for your bid. Instant gratification. A convention every day! And all without leaving your easy chair.

But Internet auctions, including eBay, lack the "fever" of a live auction, where you have to decide within a few seconds whether to place that next bid or not. The Heritage auction I just attended managed to have the best of both worlds. First, all the auction items are on the Internet at the Heritage website. Collectors all over the world could inspect the goodies and bid at their leisure. Then, after Internet bidding had closed, a live auction was held in which bidders could continue to compete for items by bidding in person or by fax or by phone. Collectors had a day or so to study and digest the results of the Internet bidding before the final live round. I liked it. And where will auctions go from here...what is the next step in the evolution? I have no idea, but I will probably be there!



Comic Book MARKETPLACE

STEPHEN A. GEPPI
*President and
Chief Executive Officer*

JOHN K. SNYDER, JR.
Chief Administrative Officer

RUSS COCHRAN
Editor & Publisher
cbm@gemstonepub.com

J.C. VAUGHN
Executive Editor & Associate Publisher
ads@gemstonepub.com

ARNOLD T. BLUMBERG
East Coast Editor
barnold@gemstonepub.com

PAT CALHOUN
West Coast Editor

BILL BAKER
JENNIFER CONTINO
MICHELLE NOLAN
MIKE WILBUR
Columnists

ED ROCK
Production Manager

PRICING & MARKET REPORTS

ROBERT M. OVERSTREET
Senior Pricing Editor

MICHAEL NAIMAN
Market Reports Editor
mnaiman1@cox.net

MARK HUESMAN
Pricing Coordinator
feedback@gemstonepub.com

ADVERTISING

Toll Free (888) 375-9800
Ext. 249 or Ext. 413
ads@gemstonepub.com

BRENDA BUSICK
Creative Director, Ext. 404
bbrenda@gemstonepub.com

RESEARCH

JOE MCGUCKIN
mjoe@diamondgalleries.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION

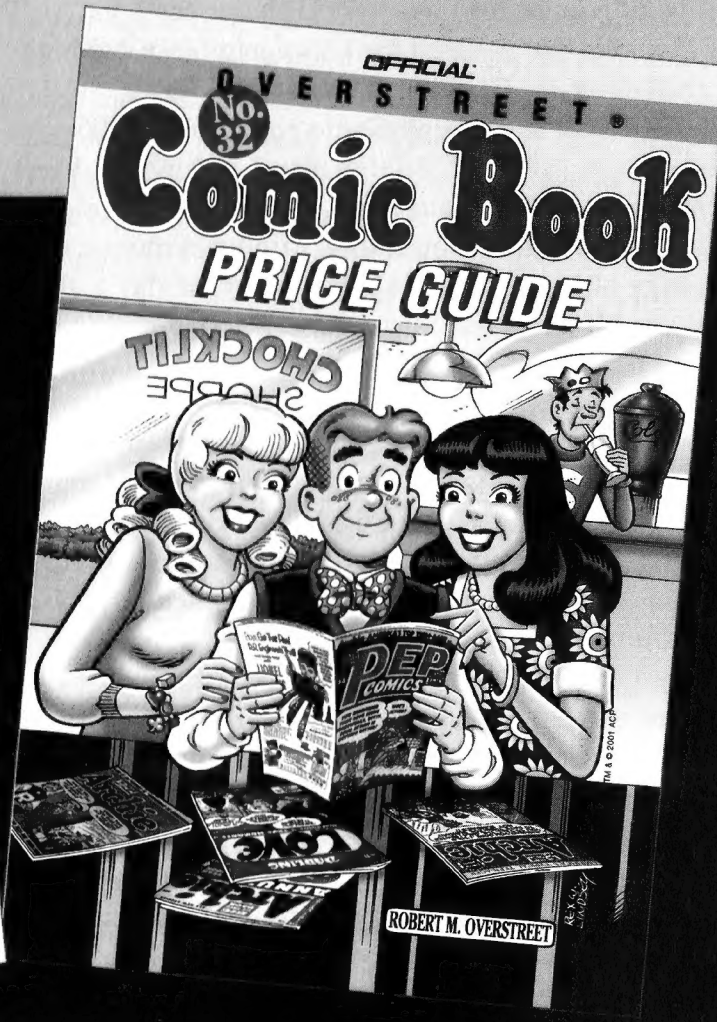
Toll Free (800) 322-7978
Or (417) 256-2224
cbm@gemstonepub.com

ANGELA MEYER
Traffic & Operations Manager

JUDY GOODWIN
Customer Service Manager

KIMBERLEY GROVER
Administrative Assistant

IT'S WORTH HOW MUCH?



Each year, *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* arrives in the spring and people all over America discover that they're sitting on treasures they never imagined...How much are your comics worth? Stop in this April and get a copy of this "Must Have" book!

And if you're in the market to sell, Geppi's Comic World is always interested in buying *pre-1965* comics! Fax your list to (410) 455-9806 or e-mail gdoug@diamondcomics.com.



A Baltimore tradition since 1974!
1116 N. Rolling Road • Baltimore, MD 21128
(410) 788-0900 gdoug@diamondcomics.com

MARKETPLACE MAIL

Hurrayyyyyy!

A better late than never letter about a great show that happened in my backyard...

Okay...you know it is due...HURRRAYYYYYYYYYY!!!!

I did not think I would live long enough to see a Baltimore Comic show take place that I could actually set up at and display my wares...and actually make serious money. It was absolute pandemonium for us at Basement Comics from 10:05 when they started trickling in, to 4:30 when I could finally get a break and walk the room to survey the damage and see how other dealers did.

A mixed review from the other usual suspects, but overall a happy exchange of comics for money took place across the board. We sold books that covered the entire gambit of buying, that included a *X-Men* #1, *Giant-Size X-Men* #1, *Marvel Mystery* #80, *Jo-Jo* #20 and a High Grade *Four Color* #596 Turok to a very happy collector. A large chunk of high grade Marvels from a new collection and a ton of \$1 and \$5 comics that were recently added to the inventory. Mid level money, the \$15 to \$100 range of buying made up the rest of the day and we were happy to fill many want lists and make new customers at the end of the day.

The coolest thing was the meeting of customers that I have not seen in some cases up to ten years or more. Customers that were very young when I worked at Geppi's Comic World many moons ago still recognized me and talked about days gone by. Even the King Of Comics himself, Steve Geppi stopped by my table and chatted for twenty minutes and I very much appreciated the time he took to stop and say hello. It amazed me how many remembered and how many lives I have interacted with over the last 17 years of comic retail.

Maybe that is what Baltimore had that the past few big shows did not have, a sense of the past and a bond that linked buyers to sellers over a long period of time. It was like an old time family get-together that calmed the nerves of the buyers—no fear of large crowds on this day. It is goofy but perhaps a sense of familiarity that made every one comfortable and willing to forget about the craziness outside the doors and have a great day, if just for a few hours.

Marc Nathan and all involved, congratulations on a well-done job and from Tanya and I, we hope that the success of this show continues to grow and flourish in the future.

Thanks yet again for helping make the house payments.

AL STOLTZ

BASEMENT COMICS

basmntcomx@aol.com

Havre de Grace, MD 21078

More Whitman/Western/Eerie data

Iwould like to correct a statement, which I made in the *CBM* #87 letters column. The word balloon used on the 1971 *Bugs Bunny* comic which I referred to actually had Bugs saying "Hey doc!" and not "What's Up, Doc."

That will teach me to rely on thirty-year old memories and not check the actual issue in question. By the way, that issue is *Bugs Bunny* #137 (September 1971).

Also, I should have mentioned a few other uses of word balloons on Western-produced comics. Early Gold Key issues of several titles had the first story start with a few panels at the bottom of the front cover and those panels often contained word balloons. Another example of a rare Western cover word balloon, which I located, was on *The Little Stooges* #1 (September 1972).

That issue sported a "thought" balloon.

On another subject, I have a few corrections/additions to the *Eerie/Modern Day* black and white magazines listed in the "Michael Naiman Report" [in *CBM* 87].

First, there is no *Terrors of Dracula* V1 #1 (May 1979). That May 1979 first issue is actually numbered V1 #3. Also, a V2 #2 (May 1980) and V3 #1 (May 1981) also exist.

As for *Weird Vampire Tales*, there are two V5 #2s. One is dated April 1981 and the other is the August 1981 issue, which is listed in the article.

I bought all of these from my local newsstand back in 1979-'82 and am quite likely the only serious collector who was interested in this line at that time of publication.

John Fishel

Dallastown, PA 17313

CBM 88 in depth

Some brief comments on the latest issue, just purchased and devoured. I always start with a good flick through the whole issue and especially to see the "Color Gallery." I've seen so few examples of *PS Magazine*, so it was a treat to see eleven color examples by Anderson. Is this magazine still being published? And the four pages of *Rudolph* were totally charming. Thanks for including the back covers too.

The first feature I read is always your editorial welcome to the issue. I'm glad you addressed Tom Devlin's clumsily provocative manifesto against EC in *The Comics Journal* and I agree heartily with your sentiments. For my money, today's cartoonists like Seth, Clowes, Ware, Cooper, Stephens, Jeff Smith, Patrick McDonnell and many others can really come close to the 'visual poetry' of the old strip masters you mentioned. I'd certainly like to see *CBM* continue to include non-superhero coverage, past and present please.

Next on my list are the letters, as I always enjoy learning what readers know about and to hear differing, and often strongly held, opinions. Something nobody has pointed out yet is that there is actually a lot more to read in the new Cochran *CBMs*, simply because there is much less advertising. In fact, this slightly worries me, because from my magazine publishing experience, I know how important ad revenue can be.



From here I stroll through the features, usually checking in early with Michelle Nolan, although I much prefer her perceptive and personable commentary to dull checklists of collectibles. Dan Owens' *Rudolph* piece was a handy guide for collectors, but I would have enjoyed a bit more insight into the contents and appeal of the series, some background on artist Rube Grossman, given only a single footnote credit, and maybe some comments from the late Shelly Mayer?

Bob Beerbohm's 'discovery' was fascinating, as I'd heard rumors that the British *Comic Cuts* had been distributed in the States. Have any copies of this American version been discovered?

I have been enjoying R.C. Harvey's columns consistently and look forward to further installments focused on one cartoonist or series or topic, much as I enjoyed his detective work into record-setting strips.

Where I have to agree with Roger Clark, and no, I am not in a cranky mood, believe me, is on his dislike of articles that consist solely of plot recaps. In that category, I have to put both Pat Calhoun's and Scott Shaw's columns this issue. There is only one thing worse than having to retell a story from a comic in prose, and that is having to read that re-telling.

In sublime contrast, Dave Winiewicz's essay on Frazetta's 'deliciously-rounded buttocks' was the very last thing I read (as usual) and I found myself merely skip-reading it, trying to find anything engaging, embarrassed by the overblown and utterly uncritical gushing. I do question devoting space in every single *CBM* to Frazetta, when so many others go unacknowledged.

I surprise myself how much I enjoy reading the "Market Reports," because I know so little about the debates and hard realities of trying to make a living selling comics. Near the end of my list to read comes "New & Noteworthy," though this time I was intrigued to learn about *Nowheresville* and will look into the trade paperback.

I was interviewing Tom De Falco last year and told him about my Jack Cole review for *CBM*. He was surprised and told me he'd not paid much attention to *CBM*, because he'd always assumed it was only about values, grading and collecting. This misunderstanding may not be that uncommon, but I hope more people are discovering *CBM* as it evolves under your guidance. I look forward to many more to come.

Paul Gravett

Thanks for your letter, Paul. We are trying to stay away from articles which only rehash plot outlines, preferring enlightened commentary. And it seems that readers feel strongly about the Frazetta coverage, both pro and con. Frazetta has always been my favorite artist, and even though he was not that much of a comic book artist, the few things he did for comic books were so good that I feel that he deserves the space he has received. But, having now covered his "roughs," his "fine-line" techniques, the comparisons between his art and Hal Foster's and the opening of the Frazetta museum we have almost covered the bases. I still want to do an article on his pencil drawings, and I will have said my

piece on Frazetta. You will notice we have not done an article on his paintings, as those are outside the scope of CBM, and also where he has achieved his greatest fame. I do agree with Doc Dave that Frazetta must be considered to be one of the most influential artists of the 20th Century, and that many of his works, in all mediums, are masterpieces of concept, design, and execution. But like Babe Ruth, Frazetta often strikes out...every time at bat is not a home run! He is, and always will be, an amazing talent as an artist. I have watched Frazetta at work. I have seen him sit down with a blank piece of paper and a pencil, or a blank canvas and a brush, and create the most amazing images right out of his head. No reference books, no opaque projector, nothing! It flows straight from his brain down through his arm and hand, right onto the page, and I find that fascinating. His is a remarkable and God-given talent, and I am in awe of it. Having said that, I will agree with my critics that there should not be a Frazetta article in every issue of CBM, and there won't be.

Russ Cochran

Grading CGC

I just wanted to respond to Michael Naiman's question [in "The Michael Naiman Report," *CBM* 88] regarding other collector/dealer experiences with CGC's grading service. I have submitted approximately 150 comics for grading as a dealer, from my personal collection and for customers in both my stores. I get most submissions back in a relatively timely manner. In about 80% of the cases they have been graded in the ballpark of what I expected. Ten percent of the time they were a little higher than I expected and 10% of the time they were lower. On those occasions where there was a glaring discrepancy they have been very accessible and answered all questions and listened to my side of the story. In a few of the cases they have agreed with me and in a few cases they have not. In one particular case the disagreement revolves around what is and what isn't restoration and I understand that on this particular book there isn't a right answer. I have also bought a number of slabbed books through the mail based solely on the CGC description and in every case the books were exactly what I expected. In fact, out of the slabs they looked even better. So I guess all I have to say is they are doing their jobs as far as I am concerned.

I would also like to respond to Mike's comments about those of us who wish Mike would just get along and stop his harassment of CGC. We really don't hold hands and wear rose-colored glasses. All we are trying to say is come out of the outhouse, blow out the candles, get some electricity, realize that TV won't ruin the movie industry, know that Elvis won't corrupt your daughter. It's here, get used to it and move into the 21st century with the rest of us. Thank you for a great read month in and month out.

Richard Evans
Bedrock City, Houston, Texas

MARKETPLACE MAIL

I just finished my overview of *CBM* #88. I go to my favorite articles first then read the whole book. Always great. Michael Naiman's articles are always entertaining and informative. In this issue he hit the nail right on the head and sank it with one swing! I'm glad that someone out there has the BALLS to talk about CGC and their QUESTIONABLE practices and expose their LAME attempt to justify their credibility. Most people are involved in a courtship with CGC and do NOT want to upset them for fear that their books might receive a lower grade in retaliation. This in itself is absurd. CGC may well indeed have its place in OUR market but until the standards are set and publicized for ALL to see (like in Overstreet) they merely have a license to print \$\$\$\$. Touché, Michael, for educating, informing and having the guts to publicly print what NEEDS to be printed. I'm glad he takes his job seriously enough to take a stance on something so controversial as CGC.

Rick Davidson
Chula Vista

The CGC, "slabbing," and the distinctions between restored and unrestored books is one of the most hotly-debated issues affecting comic book collectors and dealers today. As such, it deserves our continuing attention, and we will continue to publish opinions both pro and con. Before the Mile High books were found in 1977, most of us had no concept of what Near Mint really meant. The grading process and the acceptance of it by collectors is an evolutionary thing, and will continue to evolve just as it has in coin and stamp collecting. The mere fact that CGC is kept busy grading and slabbing books is an indication that their service is becoming more widely accepted, and we are sure that gradually any flaws in the system will be worked out.

RC

Don Heck Appreciator

It's been a year now since I have discovered eBay, and I have spent more there on old comics than I had in the whole of ten years before that. For a large part, that is a factor of availability. As a comic enthusiast from Europe, I had to browse through advertisements in magazines such as this one and the *Comics Buyers' Guide* to find a few of the little gems I was looking for and make expensive phone calls to see if they were still for sale at impossible hours, due to the time difference between here and the States. Now I can find anything I am looking for within weeks. And often for far less than I would have paid in the past, since I buy to read and the lesser grades often sell relatively cheap. So not only have I managed to find just about everything I still was missing in my collection, I also began looking at new interesting series to collect. Over the year I have found a few that were a big surprise to me, because the art or the stories were better than expected and the price still affordable. These are the books that let me echo Charles Dickens' Oliver's words: Please Sir, can I have some more? I would like to share them with you and invite you to submit your own favorites.

Don Heck is often regarded as second rate or journeyman artist. Someone who took every job he could get and did his job well, but without any artistry. However true this may be for his later years, it certainly doesn't apply to his earlier work. When Stan Lee started up the new Marvel in 1958 after a yearlong crash, he invited three artists to join him: Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and Don Heck. All three did stories as well as covers. At that point, Jack Kirby clearly wasn't yet the one and only King. Don Heck's stories were often well drawn. He was one of many artists who worked in a comic book style that was derived from Milton Caniff's years on *Terry and the Pirates*. In Don Heck we can even see some influence of Caniff's successor George Wunder, especially in the delicate line work between the well-spotted blacks. Like Kirby, he had worked with Stan Lee before 1958. In Les Daniels' history of Marvel comics we can see a beautiful page from *Navy Combat* #1, a splash page for a 'Torpedo' Taylor story. As far as I know, that series ran in all issues of *Navy Combat* and it is well worth checking out. The stories are the weakest link here, but they are certainly worth a look. But that is not the series I want to write about. Before he worked for Timely, Don Heck drew for Comic Media. In fact, it seems he started his career there and if he did, he came onto the scene as an impressive artist right from the start.

I started looking around on e-bay for Comic Media magazines with Don Heck art in them. I tried to get some issues of *Horrific*, with his famous "headshots." But pre-code horror is hot and most of those went beyond my budget. I finally settled on a copy of *Danger* #9 in "very good" condition, which as we all know means it's just passable, which went for \$14. Add about \$5 postage to it and I could try and see if Don Heck's early work was as impressive on the inside as it was on the outside. Because anyone with a set of Gerber books will know that Don Heck's covers for Comic Media are all beautiful.

All through the fifties, Don Heck combined delicate line-work with Caniff-style blacks, making it graphic in a way only Alex Toth could surpass. It has a lot of action and gives Don Heck a real chance to shine.

All in all it is a book that leaves me wanting more. Clearly Comic Media was a company with high production standards. One of the drawbacks of buying on eBay (or through the mail) is that you only have the covers to go on. Sometimes that can be quite deceiving. But here, I can expect not to be disappointed if I buy another one. I think I will go for later issues rather than the earlier ones, partly because they may be cheaper, but also because I like Don Heck's art slightly better when it had matured just a little bit. But please remember when we meet...I got here first.

Ger Apeldoorn
Holland

CMB reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content. Send communications to: Comic Book Marketplace, PO Box 469, West Plains, MO 65775, or email us at cbm@gemstonepub.com.

Double Artists

by Pat Calhoun



A great way to examine how closely connected the worlds of science fiction and comic books are is to showcase a few well-known comic artists who also did superb covers for science fiction and fantasy magazines. Such crossovers are hardly surprising; not only are the SF/F elements present in both modes, but the same editors and publishers were often involved in both mags and comics. And the cover is where the two forms are most alike, key illustrations with the tough task of grabbing a buyer's attention. The three offerings here all must have stood out even on the crowded newsstands of 1939, 1949, and 1959.

Startling Stories for September 1939 features a wonderful Alex Schomburg scene of interplanetary mystery; one of the most intriguing questions it raises

is where these aliens found a graveyard so full of foxy femmes! This cover—rather than the usual practice of illustrating a story inside—was used for a contest where readers could write in their own “stories” based on the cover scene, with the most imaginative entries receiving prizes and appearing in print.

The lead novel (*Startling* ran a full-lengthener in every issue) is “The Bridge to Earth” by Robert Moore Williams, the first novel from the Missouri author who would go on to write the “Jongor” series of prehistoric adventures.

Another *Startling* story feature was the ‘SF Hall of Fame’ wherein each month a classic tale was reprinted—this issue chose Edmond Hamilton’s “The Space Visitors” from 1930. Hamilton, in addition to writing many other great SF yarns, would also go on to be an important scripter at DC in the 1950s and 1960s.

Other features of interest include a two-page illustrated science biography (of Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite) by Jack Binder (who went on to run a comic art “shop”), and “Thrills in Science” by editor Mort Weisinger, crossover extraordinaire, who within a couple of years would end up at DC creating Aquaman and Green Arrow on the first day of his comics career.

Weird Tales for July 1949 came on strong with a fabulous cover by Matt Fox. The bulk of Fox’s known work is his covers and interior illos for *WT* and a handful of comic covers and stories

ADVENTURES INTO WEIRD WORDS

for Atlas and Youthful in the pre-Code years. He also inked some back-up stories in the early Marvel books of the early 1960s. In fact, most of his Atlas work was as inker over someone else’s pencils, but he always made the story his own. It was a small output, but—as this *WT* classic shows—of awesomely high quality with the stylistic intensity of a master.

The cover story, “Come and Go Mad” by Fredric Brown, hails from another kind of double-duty writer: Brown wrote excellent, often humorous, SF as well as many outstanding mystery novels. Also included in this issue are “In the X-Ray,” a wild weirdie by Fritz Leiber, author of the Fafhrd and Gray Mouser sword and sorcery series, and a spooker by



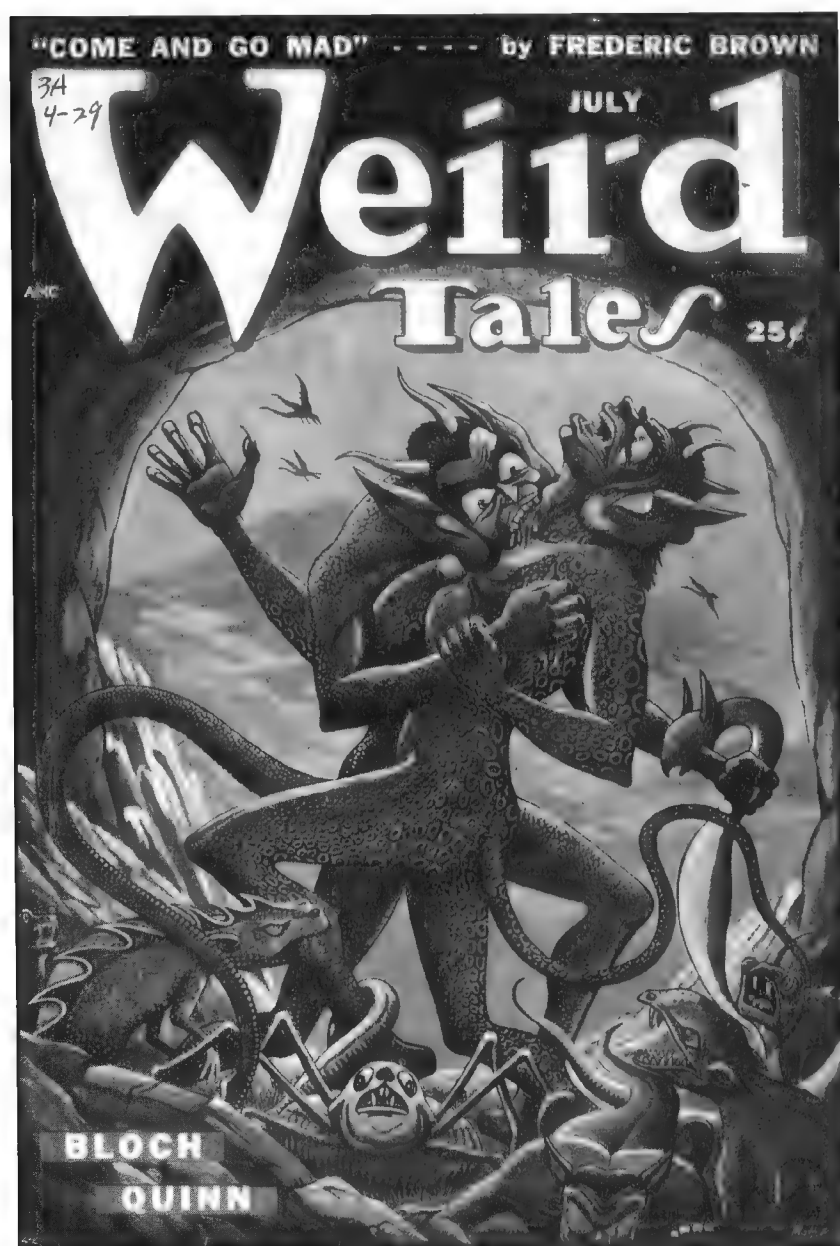
Startling Stories (September 1939), Alex Schomburg’s provocative masterpiece of a cover raises many questions. The only thing that’s certain is Xela’s ability to capture the colorful essence of an SF situation—whatever it may be!

ADVENTURES INTO WEIRD WORDS

Robert *Psycho* Bloch. Other artists present are John Giunta, who drew tons of comics, and Vincent Napoli, who turned H. Rider Haggard's *Lost Race* masterpiece *She* into a handsome graphic novel for Fast Fiction in 1949.

The two previous entries were both classic pulp mags, but in the 1950s SF/F mags switched to digest format. While there was less emphasis on art in this smaller size, covers remained impressive, and the interior illos focused on achieving a "modern" style. Wally Wood's cover for the October 1959 *Galaxy* is a beauty!

The story highlight this issue is "A Death in the House" by Clifford D. Simak, where an alien crash-lands in the woods of a lonely old man's farm. The way Mose overcomes his original revulsion for this creature that "stank" and has a "no-face" with a "fringe of worms" is moving,



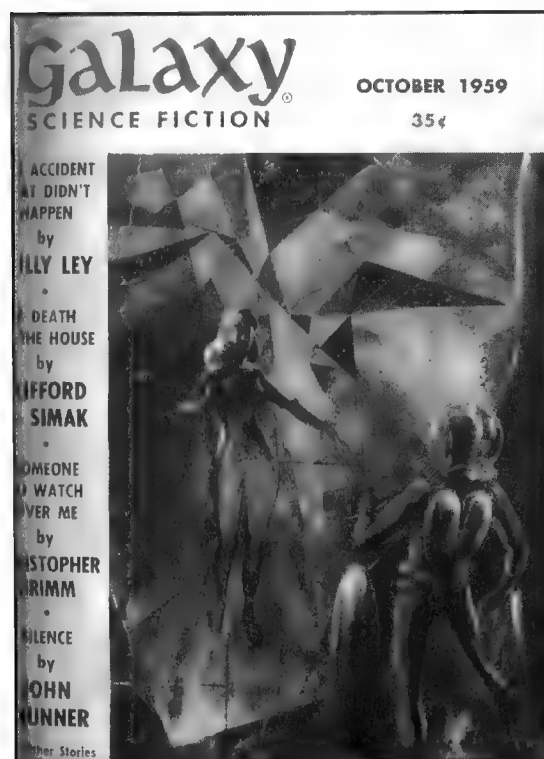
Weird Tales (July 1949), most of Matt Fox's lurid covers feature a gallery of demonic faces, and this one is no exception. Each of the little monsters in the foreground has baleful eyes that drench the image in depravity.

and the way he comes to crave the companionship the alien could offer is profound. This is one of the finest of Simak's stories of "affable aliens," a treasure trove that includes "The Big Front Yard," Hugo winner for best short story in 1958, and the novel "Way Station," awarded the Hugo for 1963.

Some of the other artists who drew for *Galaxy* in 1959 are Gray Morrow and Virgil Finlay. The August issue—with another fantastic Wood cover—even has a story illustrated by Mad's Don Martin! Most of *Galaxy*'s other covers were the work of Ed Emshwiller whose appealing talents also adorned many of the Ace "SF Double Novels" that were a memorable paperback series from this fertile period of SF publishing.

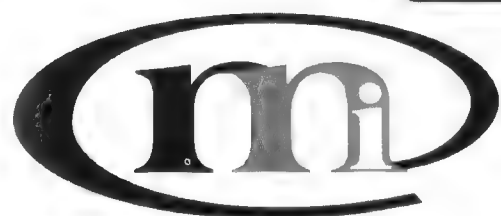
Interestingly enough, the three mags shown here correspond with three peak moments in the comic book biz: the 1939 *Startling*, coming out just after *Superman* #1, captures the excitement of the Golden Age, the 1949 *Weird Tales*, came out just after *Amazing Mysteries* #32—the first Atlas horror comic and a gearing up of the Atomic Age, while the 1959 *Galaxy* was hot on the heels of *Showcase* #22—the first Green Lantern issue—a very important step in the development of the Silver Age.

In fact many of us reading DC's as the '60s dawned considered comics to be a branch of science fiction: understandable since Weisinger, Hamilton, Julie Schwartz, Gardner Fox, John Broome, and Otto Binder—SF stalwarts all—were creating their silver universe. And pre-hero Marvel was basically an SF enterprise back then as well, with the "monster" format firmly established in their four fantasy titles.



Galaxy (October 1959), Wally Wood in a lovely mystical SF mood as some enchanting curves materialize from a geometric dimensional doorway. This copy is from a bound set—hence the trim on the left, but the numinous image is intact.

THE SECOND MASTRONET, INC. AMERICANA PREMIER CATALOG AUCTION MAY 16-17, 2002



MASTRONET Inc.
Your Premier Source
For Fine Collectibles

1515 W. 22nd Street • Suite 125
Oak Brook, IL 60523
630.472.1200 • fx.630.472.1201
www.mastronet.com

Register for your FREE catalog!
Call us today at 630-472-1200.

Our May 16-17 auction is shaping up beautifully, featuring every item pictured here and over 1,500 other lots of the finest memorabilia and collectibles from several areas, including: Political, Historical, Comics & Comic Art, Toys, Non-Sport Trading Cards, and Movies. In addition, our entire auction is presented on our website, where you can bid in real-time on every item, 24 hours a day. To Register to bid and receive your **FREE** 300+ page, full-color auction catalog, call us at 630-472-1200, or visit us at www.mastronet.com and click on **REGISTER**.

Fiction House's 4-Issue Wonders

The Short Patriotic Paths of *Super-American* and *Captain Fight*

by Michelle Nolan



Nearly five decades after the company's final fling with pulpwood pulchritude, Fiction House still epitomizes much of the comic-book allure of their era. Fiction House was either the least of the large publishers or the best of the second-tier enterpris-

es. It all depends on how you look at the three G's for which Fiction House was famed—Girls, Guns and Gorillas.

One of the best and most prolific of the pulp magazine publishers, Fiction House was the most consistent of all comic book outfits during the 1940s. Fiction House produced 552 issues over this ten-year span during the heart of the Golden Age, never releasing more than 61 issues (1949) nor fewer than 46 (1940) during the decade. National (DC), Dell, Fawcett, Timely (Marvel) and Quality all published more comics, and all with far better known characters, during the 1940s. But no company stuck to what it did best with more single-mindedness than Fiction House. Except for a brief post-war fling with *Toyland Comics* #1-3 and *Movie Comics* #1-4, Fiction House published nothing but comic books packed with high adventure and even higher hem lengths—not to mention the lowest bustlines in comics—in every conceivable scenario.

I like the comparison Jules Feiffer makes in the first fan-friendly book on comic books, *The Great Comic Book Heroes* (1965), also the first volume to reprint Golden Age stories. Comparing Golden Age comics to the film industry of the era, Feiffer called National the M-G-M of the comics with the most stars, and dubbed Quality the Warner Brothers of the four-color field with the most memorable production values. He also called Fox the Monogram of the comics industry and Fiction House the Republic. It was a

most apt comparison, since no film studio produced sheer action better than Republic, often with surprisingly effective special effects for a "B movie" outfit.

Intriguingly, though, Fiction House did little with costumed superheroes. For those who are into pulps, that's not surprising, since Fiction House left the hero pulps entirely to other publishers. Ironically, most of the costumed heroes Fiction House did dream up were colorless, with drab, single-color costumes, short stories and poor plotlines unworthy of such a peerless pulp publisher.

These fellows are almost totally forgotten. There was the Red Panther in *Jungle Comics* #1-20 (called the White Panther in #1). The Lightning in *Jumbo Comics* #15-41 (with an odd debut, as the cover feature of #14 but no story inside!). The Red Comet in



Fight Comics #16 (Dec 1941)—scarce issue!!

Planet Comics #1-20 (except #2, plus a reprint in #69). Rip Regan the Power Man in *Fight Comics* #3-14. The Phantom Falcon in *Wings Comics* #69-106 and #110. Commando Ranger in *Rangers* (formerly *Rangers of Freedom*) #13-20. The vast majority of their stories were highly forgettable, a piddling five to seven pages, with a handful of eight- to ten-pagers. There were also five Fiction House issues of Spirit reprints from 1952-54, but that's another tale.

Oddly, however, Fiction House did try four-issue flings with three fully developed patriotic hero concepts late in 1941 and early in 1942—Super-American in *Fight Comics* #15-18, Captain Fight in *Fight* #16-19, and the kid group Commando Rangers in *Rangers of Freedom* #1-4 (plus a cover appearance on #5, even though in that issue the titular heroes inexplicably morphed into a group of Marines). Super-American's four stories ran 13, 13, 14 and 14 pages; Captain Fight's epics were 13, 14, 14 and 9 pages; and the Rangers of Freedom went 12, 13, 13 and 13. This was generally as good as it got during the Golden Age, notwithstanding several Daredevil and Crimebusters "novels" by Charles Biro. It seemed as though Fiction House was actually getting serious about costumed capers.

The characters were reasonably original, to boot. Super-American was brought back from the "advanced year" 2350; Captain Fight was a high-school coach trained to the peak of fitness; and the Rangers of Freedom were one of the first teams in comics, kids or otherwise. The Rangers are beyond the purview of this column, but Ron Goulart recently profiled them in *The Comics Buyer's Guide*.

When Super-American made his debut in *Fight* #15 (Oct. 1941), the only character besides Superman who had used "Super" in his name was a one-shot, eight-page oddity entitled Super Slave in Timely's *Mystic Comics* #5 (March 1941). For that matter, the only other "Super" character ever to emerge was the brilliant parody Supersnipe, a.k.a. "Koppy McFad, the kid with the most comic books in the world." Supersnipe first appeared in *Shadow Comics* Vol. 2 #3 (March 1942) and gained his own highly popular title later that year.

It might appear that Super-American, which featured a knock-off logo style uncomfortably close to that of Superman, was threatened out of existence by National Comics. There was never an official lawsuit against Super-American, however, unlike those filed against Fox's 1939 one-shot Wonderman in *Wonder Comics* #1 and Fawcett's long-running Captain Marvel. More likely, Super-American (who was last in *Fight* #18, April 1942) was simply the victim of the war-comics fever inspired by the attack on Pearl

Harbor, as were Captain Fight (last in *Fight* #19, June 1942) and the Rangers of Freedom (last in *Rangers of Freedom* #4, April 1942).



Page one from *Fight Comics* #16 (Dec 1941)—the only Superman logo knock-off ever!!

Comic books lagged the Dec. 7, 1941, catastrophe at Pearl Harbor by about six months with regard to newsstand dates and by three or four months with regard to newsstand appearances. The first references in *Fight Comics* to Pearl Harbor, for example, were in #19. The Justice Society joined the war on Japan as the Justice Battalion in *All Star* #11 (June-July 1942). Captain America #13 (April 1942) included a spectacular "Remember Pearl Harbor" cover but nothing about Pearl Harbor inside. *Spy Smasher* #4 (April 1942) was one of the first comics to hit the stands with a complete "Remember Pearl Harbor" story theme, but I suspect the slick Fawcett comics line had a little less lag time in its production and distribution.

FICTION HOUSE'S FOUR-ISSUE PATRIOTS

At any rate, Fiction House's three features quickly gave way to some of the finest war-related stories and covers of World War II. All of the leading comic book publishers involved their super-heroes in the war to some extent, but Fiction House was far and away the leading publisher of "regular" fictional war-themed stories, with *Fight*, *Wings* and *Rangers* all quickly making the conversion to the first truly successful war comics.

Even so, I still find it fascinating that Fiction House's comic editors approved the name Super-American. This led to the amusing corruption "Super-Amerikaner" uttered by

"Captain" characters in early 1940s comics, including more than two dozen costumed heroes. I suspect that this Captain chaos led Fiction House to abandon Captain Fight in favor of the much more nicely done Seniorita Rio and Rip Carson, Chute Trooper (both of which began in #19) and Hooks Devlin, Special Agent (which replaced Captain Fight in #20).

Even so, very few short-lived Golden Age costumed heroes received such full-fledged, relatively original treatment. It's obvious that Fiction House, however briefly, thought it had a pair of winners in Super-American and Captain Fight (and the Rangers of Freedom, as well).

Of the 829 issues Fiction House published from 1938-1954, only two featured a pair of full-length costume/super-hero stories plus a super-hero cover—*Fight* #16 (Dec. 1941) and #17 (Feb. 1942). Fiction House cover mainstay Dan Zolnerowich did both covers in the frenetic, action-packed style that Alex Schomburg was beginning to popularize at Timely and Nedor.

I wonder if it's merely a coincidence that I consider *Fight* #16 and 17 to be two of the scarcest of Golden Age super-hero comics. In more than three decades of attending large conventions, I'm certain I've seen fewer than a dozen copies of either issue. Even though the Gerber *Photo-Journal* ranks #16 a "4" and #17 a "5" I feel both definitely should be rated "6" as #18 is rated a "5" and #19 is rated a "4." *Fight* #15 is rated a "6." How many copies of these five issues of *Fight* have you ever seen? How many of you have them in your collection? Of course, the Gerber scarcity indexes, dating to the late 1980s, are uncertain topics for debate today, since so many Golden Age comics have been squirreled away in permanent collections over the past decade. Ironically, one of the effects of Ernie Gerber's monumental *Photo-Journal* project has been to make many comics scarcer—from the market standpoint—because so many collectors have sought them out!

Fiction House came up with wonderfully bizarre cover blurbs, but the one for the debut of Super-American in *Fight* #15 may top them all. "Super-American answers his Nation's zero-hour S.O.S....Washington invaded...fifth columnists run wild...the skies rain parachute troops...then into the midst of the dictator-spawned violence zooms a *future* U.S. soldier, summoned by a despairing scientist from the advanced year 2350. *Super-American*—shot back in time to battle the Hordes of the Secret Dictator."

All without a single exclamation point!!!!



Page 52 from *Fight Comics* #16 (Dec 1941)—first Captain Fight story.

Nazi villains, when it should have been "Uber-Amerikaner," of course, were it not for the majority of readers who had never heard of the German word "Uber."

On the other hand, the name "Captain Fight" was so generic as to be stultifying. There were more than 30

"One Man Against the Mad Dogs of Europe!" read a box below the first-page logo—which almost perfectly copied Superman's logo—in a story bylined "Jefferson Starr." Scientist Allan Bruce, using his Chronopticon, asks for help from the U.S. President of 2350 and is sent Super-American. He vanquishes invaders who wear proto-Nazi uniforms with emblems similar to but clearly not yet swastikas. The invaders, led by Tyrannus, blow up the Chrysler Building, among others! In 1941, that was the iconic building in New York, with the Empire State Building having been completed only a few years earlier.

The following three Super-American stories were "Blitz of Human Bombs," "Blaster of the Pig-Boat Pirates" and an untitled final tale. By #18, Super-American was battling clearly identified Nazi leaders, in contrast to the generic "mad dogs" of #15.

The weird, wild Captain Fight stories were bylined "Clark Ritchie." High-school coach Jeff Crockett, a.k.a. Captain Fight, is not given an origin in *Fight* #16 (Dec. 1941)—odd for a 13-page debut title—but he is working with a non-costumed teen protégé named Yank Adams. In contrast to Super-American, Captain Fight is clearly pitted against Nazis from the get-go, with the first story entitled "Swastika Plague." Remember, *Fight* #16 hit the stands three months before the U.S. declared war on Germany.

In Captain Fight's first two stories, he fights a Nazi henchman named "The Smiler" because of a facial scar, with a grisly concept clearly swiped from Chester Gould's *Dick Tracy* strip. What wasn't copied, though, was

the way The Smiler infiltrated Captain Fight's town of Freeville—in some of the least fashionable, wackiest drag to ever appear in comics! In the third story, Captain Fight battles an ape in human clothes, not to mention a disguised boxer who is really "Scmilling, the Nazi champ." Then, in the final Captain Fight epic in #19, Yank Adams encounters a foreign agent—disguised first as a baseball umpire and later as an elderly man—after he hits a home run into a mysterious old factory. This story has one of the most non-sensical opening dialogues ever to appear in comics.

"Hurry up and strike out! Your team has lost the game!" the umpire tells Yank during the last inning of a league championship game. "The umpire is against us," Yank thinks. "I've got to show him!" He does, natch, with a window-shattering home run into the factory. But not only is

there no indication of whether the homer is a game-winning blast, the fake umpire also follows Yank into the dressing room to give him a ball, so Yank won't search the factory for his souvenir ball. "Don't hesitate to call me the next time you need an umpire!" the man tells Yank, who replies "Thanks!" before getting into trouble in the old factory anyway and needing rescue by Captain Fight.

It's dialogue like this that gives some Golden Age comics a bad name! I can't imagine DC producing such an illogical story.

Super-American and Captain Fight—they just don't make them that way any more. And Fiction House probably knew why as well as anyone! 🐼



Scarce!! *Fight Comics* #17 (Feb 1942). Third and final Super-American cover.

Mystery of
the Missing

Super Teams!

The call to patriotism was strong, and comics responded—
but not every team effort was destined to get off the ground!

by Jeff Gelb

As far as I'm concerned, it's one of the biggest mysteries of the Golden Age of comics: Why didn't more publishers gang together their best heroes into super teams, like DC's Justice Society of America in *All Star Comics*?

Following on the heels of the obvious success of the JSA, for example, why didn't Timely team up its heroes more than in the two late issues of *All Winners*, where they appeared as the All Winners Squad? Why did Nedor only team up their top heroes on the covers of *America's Best*, and not inside as well? Why didn't Quality have Plastic Man team up with that other great Jack Cole hero, Midnight, or gather together a bunch of Will Eisner's characters?

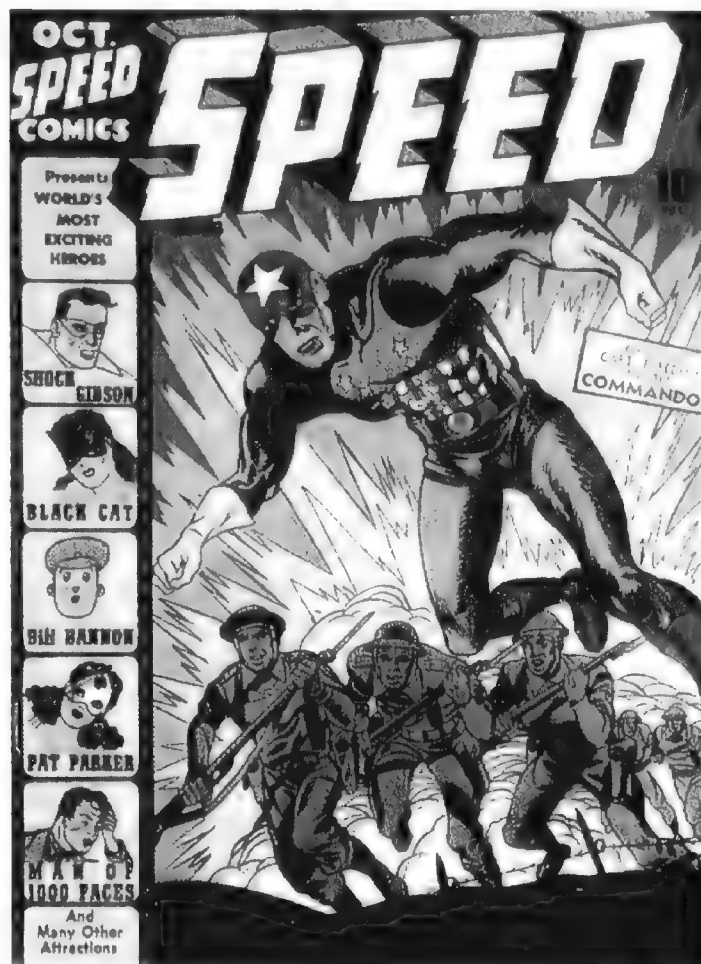
DC was the only company to exploit this useful and popular (for them) idea. Harvey sampled the concept by teaming their heroes on those gorgeous Alex Schomburg covers for *Speed Comics* and writing "The Story Behind the Cover" as a two-page text feature. But only once did they team up their characters in a comic book story, in *Speed* #23 (Oct 1942).

Under a terrific Jack Kirby cover (that didn't announce the appearance of a team inside!), the Black Cat's strip gathered Captain Freedom, Shock Gibson, the Man of 1000 Faces and the Girl Commandos to team with her in a crowded eight-pager. Art was by the talented Arturo Cazeneuve, one of the Golden Age's unsung masters, who drew super-heroes

with fluid grace and captured powerful poses in adventures against various Nazis. He did attractive work for Fox as well as Harvey.

Cazeneuve's two-page splash sets the tone for the excitement to follow, as Black Cat calls upon her heroic compatriots to help repel a Japanese attack on U.S. shores. Readers must have been thrilled to see their favorite heroes together duking it out with the invaders. At the story's end, Shock Gibson, the man with the electric hands, fries the Ratzis in their sub as they attempt a getaway—no war crimes trials here! In the last panel the Cat waves goodbye to her friends, and a caption entices, "And so, with a promise to meet again soon...our heroes and heroines go back to more fighting for freedom." Alas, a second meeting of this nameless super team never came to pass, no doubt disappointing fans who had enjoyed seeing them.

Fawcett was another matter. This company often teamed a hero or two for a story or even several (the three-issue team-up of Captain Marvel tracking down a Nazi-brainwashed Spy Smasher in *Whiz* #16-#18 was an especially exciting example). Bulletman met Captain Marvel in *Whiz* #25 and Captain Marvel Jr. in *Master* #22. The list goes on, and the company was smart enough to compile the Marvel Family into its own title for dozens of adventures. But only once (to my knowledge) did Fawcett team-up some unrelated



Long before Casper or Richie Rich, Harvey's Golden Age titles offered standard super-hero fare. *Speed* #23 (Oct 1942) contains the only big Harvey super-hero team-up, as well as a superb cover penciled by Jack 'King' Kirby.



Black Cat blasts an attacking enemy in this splash page from *Speed* #23 (Oct 1942), the one Harvey story where heroes banded together during the War effort. Arturo Cazeneuve's art captures the welter of intense action. [Note the dashed line added to indicate the fold in this 'two-page' spread.]

heroes and give the group a name, the (less than compelling) Crime Crusaders Club in *Master* #41 (Aug 1943).

This story, with uncredited but adequate art by Phil Bard, teams up Captain Marvel Jr. with Bulletman, Bulletgirl and Minute Man. Why the CCC contained just these heroes and none of the many other Fawcett ongoing creations is one of many questions this one-shot inspires. Another: When Fawcett finally decided to do a super group, why did they do it in a secondary title like *Master*, instead of *Whiz* or *Captain Marvel Adventures*? And, again, why do it in a non-lead strip (Minute Man)? And why no cover blurb, or any indication on the Minute Man splash page that something special was up?

In any event, for 12 pages the oddball offering wherein our heroes gave criminals a chance to kill Minute Man in exchange for a promise to buy war bonds, is a fine example of patriotism (to the max!) that was a hallmark of comics during World War II. Of course the heroes outwit and capture the crooks. Cap Jr. appears only briefly, but the bullet duo does their fair share of protecting Minute Man in his role of human target. The CCC is treated as an ongoing well-known institution: The Club meets in "a small private

house...[that] houses a galaxy of the world's most famous fighters...for this is the C.C.C...the Crime Crusaders Club!"

The story ends with no mention of the Club's future, nor was it ever seen again. Surely Fawcett fans would have enjoyed seeing these (and other) heroes receiving the 'All Star' treatment more often.

Still, for one issue each, Harvey and Fawcett fans had the unique and exciting opportunity to explore the 'What If' possibilities inherent when super-heroes meet. And that's the kind of reading reward that makes searching out Golden Age comics so much fun.

As a bonus, these issues are relatively inexpensive. Solid, complete copies of either run around \$50—a little more for *Master* #41 and a little less for *Speed* #23. If you ask me, both are great bargains for such rare pieces of comic book history.

MASTER COMICS



The Minute Man story in *Master* #41 (Aug 1943) contains the first and only appearance of Fawcett's Crime Crusaders Club, with Captain Marvel Jr., Bulletman and Bulletgirl as featured guests.

Inspiration Central

Murphy Anderson – Part One of Three

by Bill Baker

Editor's Note: A slightly different twist on "Inspiration Central" this time. While working on our Murphy Anderson tribute edition, CBM #88, it became clear that we'd never fit all the praise for Murphy into one magazine. It's equally clear that both with his art and personality he has inspired—and continues to inspire—a large number of his fellow creators. Bill Baker talked to a lot of folks within the comics community. Here's what some of them had to say:

MICHAEL T. GILBERT

Creator/Writer/Artist, Mr. Monster

Murphy Anderson is one of those quiet conscientious artists that I've come to admire more and more as I grow older. Never a showboat superstar, he never gave less than his best. I always look forward to seeing new work by him, whether it be a cover or pin-up. Last year, he wrote and drew a charming autobiographical story in *Streetwise*, which was a real departure for him. I greatly enjoyed it and hope to see more.

Mr. Anderson's inking over Carmine Infantino on Batman and the Flash, and on Curt Swan's Superman were crisp, clean and very expressive. Both artists were never better served by any inker. His solo art on Hawkman shows the care and craftsmanship that is his trademark. Even his early work on Flash Gordon and Star Pirate had life and energy.

And let's not forget his many stories for DC's sci-fi anthologies

like *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery In Space*, and intelligent sci-fi series like Adam Strange and the Atomic Knights. Marvelous stuff, and still fondly remembered by an entire generation of fans! Murphy Anderson clearly loves comics, and after all these years that love still shines brightly. Thank you, Mr. Anderson, for sharing it with us.

LEE HESTER

Owner, Lee's Comics

I first became aware of comics thanks to a book that I saw in a bookstore at the age of 12. It was *Superman from the 1930s to the 1970s*. I was captivated. Soon I was haunting the local drugstore, and buying up all the Superman titles each month: *Action Comics*, *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen*, *World's Finest*, *Justice League of America* and *Superman*.

Superman was my favorite character, and he was at his best when drawn by the team of Curt Swan and Murphy Anderson; an art team sometimes referred to as "Swanderson." Murphy's inking really made all the difference. He simply made Superman look beautiful! I remember seeing a poster of Superman flying into the air, making a peace sign. It was obviously inked by Anderson. You could just tell because it was stunning.

Murphy Anderson, along with artists such as Curt Swan, Johnny Romita, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, Gene Colan, were mass communicators. Their comics were read and enjoyed by millions, and sold on every street corner, unlike the small fraternity that reads them now. If you look at a Murphy Anderson comic, you will see a simple, elegant, and beautiful

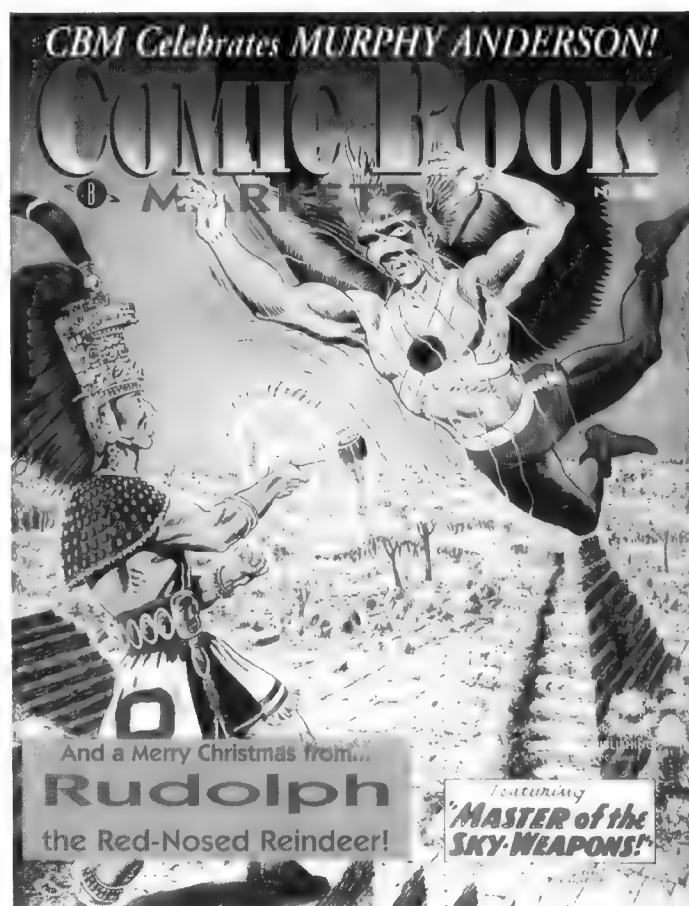
comic book. The kind of comic book that, alas, they just don't make anymore.

JIM SHOOTER

Former Editor-in-Chief, Marvel Comics

Murphy Anderson is one of those artists like Russ Heath, Alex Toth and Al Williamson that fans don't talk about as much as they should, but about whom professionals speak with reverence. Hall-of-fame. All-time great. Grandmaster.

I run into Murphy at conventions often. He's invariably the best-dressed person there. It's a sign of respect for the audience. The gesture is lost on most of the attendees, I suspect, but I don't think it matters to Murphy whether they get it or not. He's



not doing it for attention. It's just the way he is.

Always impeccable. Uncannily wrinkle free. Also, have you noticed that he doesn't age? A deal with the devil? Nah. The devil wouldn't get near him for fear of being infected with civility. The only person as nice as Murphy is his lovely wife, Helen.

He's also a gentleman. In the wonderful, old-fashioned sense. How rare in this business. How rare in this world. Gracious. Considerate. Sincere.

Murphy Anderson. What an outstanding artist. What an outstanding man. I am honored and privileged to know him.

BOB GREENBERGER

Former Director, Publishing Operations, Marvel Comics

As you might imagine, growing up reading comics drawn by Murphy Anderson helped shape my tastes as a kid. When I got to work at DC, Murphy was one of those artists I hoped to work with. To have someone of Murphy's stature come and request characters for the Who's Who was amazing to me.... He was always a gentleman, making time to tell stories. Murphy was a man of class in his soft-spoken way, always arriving at DC in a suit, apologizing for errors and taking pride in the work. They just don't make people like Murph any more.

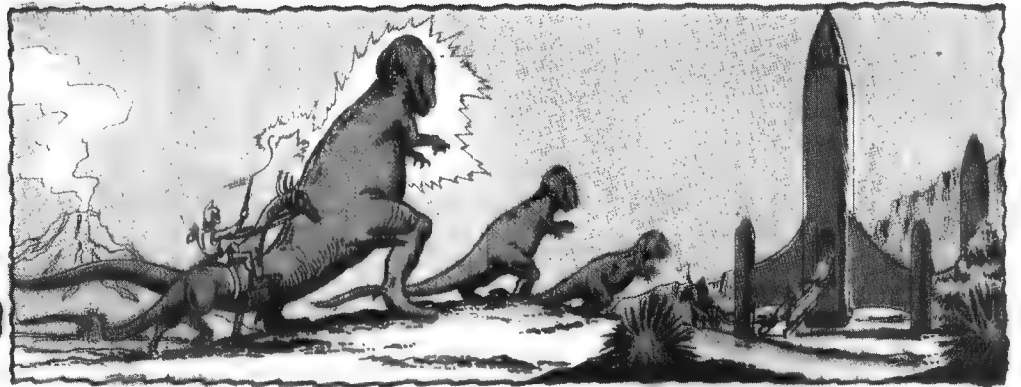
BOB SCHRECK

Group Editor, DC Comics

It was such a joy working with Murphy Anderson, even when it wasn't on an actual comic he was illustrating! At Comico The Comic Company, back in the mid '80s, I had the extreme pleasure of working with Murph, as he was the owner of Concept Color and providing all of the color separations for Comico's complete line of comics (and the entire rest of the industry's books, as well!). We had met years ago, at a Seuling or Creation convention, but I was just another snot-nosed, longhaired teenager shaking in my Frye boots in awe of the man while getting his autograph.

He'd never remember me from that earlier encounter. At least, I hope not!

"ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-ODD MILLION YEARS AGO, WE DINOSAURS WERE THE DOMINANT LIFE FORMS ON EARTH! THEN THE ALIENS FROM THE PLANET RAMONIA CAME AND CAPTURED HUNDREDS OF US..."



"TAKING US ACROSS THE THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS BETWEEN EARTH AND RAMONIA, THEY PUT US IN GREAT ZOOS WITH OTHER INTERSTELLAR FORMS OF LIFE..."



Solo Murphy from a Gardner Fox script—prime Anderson SF!

He is one of the most charming, sweetest persons I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. He and his lovely wife, Helen, always made me feel welcome whenever I visited their business establishment in the wilds of New Jersey. We always had the best of working relationships. His contribution to our beloved medium is incalculable and I just can't think of comics without seeing his work in my head. He is a gentleman, through & through. A talented one, at that! I did, eventually, get to publish a *Jonny Quest* comic with him! Hey, it's not every day you get to hang with an honest-to-goodness legend!

TIMOTHY CHANDLER

I have been a fan of Mr. Anderson's work since I first saw his work on *JLA* and *Batman*. I was especially enamored with his work on the cover of *Batman* #181. He is truly a talented man who has added to the "look" of comics for many decades.

IRWIN SMALLWOOD

Most of you have been more blessed than we have to know and work with Murphy up close in his prime, but at least we saw him first. Just last week some one gave me a copy of our high school paper of May 21, 1943, and on the op-ed page is a stirring "Graduation to Victory" cartoon by our talented cartoonist Murphy Anderson (most of us just called him M.C.). The text he attached read: "What will you, students, do as a high school graduate to help your country in this dark hour? Will you be a defense worker...a pilot...a WAAC...A Marine??? Whatever, you cannot, must not, fail the U.S.A.!!!"

We are all better off for his having passed our way. ☹️



QUIT BLAMING FRANK MILLER?!?

By J.C. Vaughn



"Despite sharing the name of the grimy gunslinger hot to punch Gary Cooper's clock in *High Noon*," wrote *Entertainment Weekly*'s Marc Benardin on EW.com, "Frank Miller is one of the good guys. Heck, in the world of comic books, he's a bona fide hero, albeit one without a cape, utility belt, or gee-whiz subterranean lair."

That is, of course, excluding the folks who believe the responsibility for the whole "darker and grittier" course comics took after 1986's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* lies with Miller. It's between him and *Watchmen* author Alan Moore. Those two are responsible for everything bad in comics, just ask those folks.

Or *maybe* it's not so simple.

David Colten, writing in *USA Today*, seemed to stumble into it pretty quickly. Miller and the after effects of his work tread on both sides of the line.

"In four groundbreaking issues in late 1986, Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* delighted and enraged comic book classicists by turning Batman—a beloved but gimmicky hero who seemed to have the keys to life forever tucked into his utility belt—into a brooding vigilante, bleak, grim and full of rooftop psychosis," he wrote.

In his theory, Colten generalizes in a way that drives late Silver Age and Bronze

Age Batman fans bananas. The popular perception was that Batman was the same character—complete with Bat Shark Repellant—millions loved and laughed at on the 1960s TV show and in the feature film. Never mind the work of Denny O'Neil, Neal Adams, Steve Englehart, Marshall Rogers and others. Batman, at least to the general public, was a goofball.

Remember how it was *before* the first Tim Burton movie? Before *Batman: The Animated Series* and its successors? Remember trying to explain to people, "No, Batman's really not like that" to no avail?

If you doubt the prevalence of that view, how many articles, news reports or features having anything to do with comics to this day start with phrases like "Pow!" "Zap!" "Boom!" or something similar?

It would be worse if not for Frank Miller.

Batman: The Dark Knight Returns sparked the Hollywood interest that in turn became Burton's 1989 feature *Batman*. Whatever it's failings, the picture, with Michael Keaton as Bruce Wayne/Batman, firmly established in the audience's mind the dark undertones inherent in the Batman mythos: a young boy sees his parents brutally murdered, survives, vows his revenge on crime, and uses his considerable wealth to facilitate

his single-minded pursuit of justice. The gimmicks were just gimmicks, not the point of the story and most certainly not a punch line.

Batman: The Animated Series and its follow-on cartoons have drawn wide acclaim from within comics fandom and from the popular culture. The characterizations in those series, though, would have been unthinkable to studio executives if not for the success of the films. This, of course, comes back to Miller's work.

If we have Frank Miller to thank for a better general awareness that Batman did not stop and have conversations with people while climbing up the sides of buildings, does that mean he's without blame on this issue?

Dark Knight most assuredly was darker and grittier. No getting around that. And a lot of darker and grittier stuff did certainly come after it. No getting around that either. But agreeing that this story or even the tone of Miller's work in general is darker does not support the argument that he's to blame for what followed.

Douglas Wolk, writing for *The Boston Phoenix*, suggested that Miller wasn't even adding things of his own when he created the world that older Bruce Wayne lived in; he was min-

ing for a truth that was already there, perhaps inescapably present in the origins of the character.

"*The Dark Knight Returns* upended almost every super-hero cliché around, extrapolating adult psychological complexity from 45 years of kids' stories," he wrote. "Miller treated Batman as a sort of benign psychopath: a man driven by his parents' murder to dress up like a bat, fight crime with his fists, enlist children in his private war, and demand that no one ever die. *The Dark Knight Returns*' mood was dark and brutal, its jokes were blacker than black, and its artwork was like almost nothing ever seen before in mainstream comics: stylized and crinkled, full of tiny, eccentric lines that earlier comics' printing techniques would not have been able to handle."

Miller has most frequently played it as part rebel, wanting to shake up the industry, and part storyteller, just telling the tale he had to tell with a specific set of characters in a specific world. There's no question that following his first run on Marvel's *Daredevil* (#158-192) he was a superstar of the medium.

He was heavily recruited by DC where he created the mini-series *Ronin* (1983-1984) and wrote the

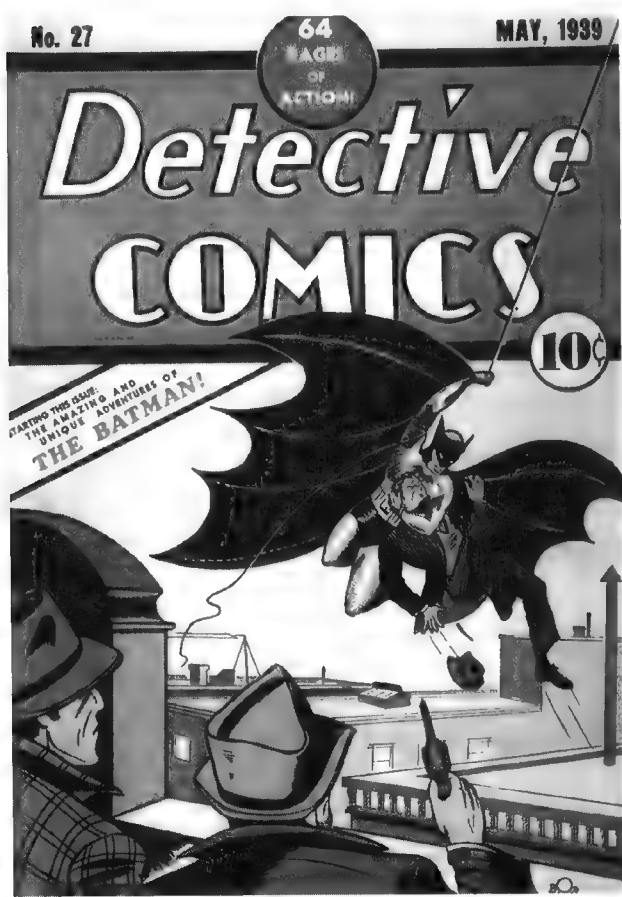


The original mini-series (right), *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (1986) ran four issues and redefined how many readers viewed Batman. Fifteen years later, writer-artist Frank Miller has returned with a three-issue mini-series, *The Dark Knight Strikes Again*. The first issue (above) debuted at the end of 2001.

QUIT BLAMING FRANK MILLER?



The events of *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and *The Dark Knight Strikes Again* could never have been anticipated when the character first appeared in *Detective Comics* #27 (below), but were the elements Frank Miller exploited inherent in the character's origin?



“Batman: Year One” story arc in *Batman* #404-407 (1987) on either side of *Dark Knight*.

“What I was after was the feeling I had when I was six years old and I first saw a Batman comic. That memory is a lot more vivid than most of my real life as a child. But that’s why people like me do silly jobs like this,” Miller told *The Onion* A.V. Club website [a sister of the popular satire site, *TheOnion.com*]. “I remember opening up this Batman comic and just basically falling into it. I can’t tell you which one it was or anything, but I just remember the way the city was drawn, and the fact that this guy was dressed like a bat just took my breath away. When I was doing *Dark Knight*, I was essentially trying to evoke that same feeling, but to an older and more sophisticated audience. Of course, the guy dresses like a bat—what kind of guy would do that? He’s got to be kind of strange.”

The violent nature of the world, a struggle against corruption, and a sort of personal war against complacency were all parts of *Dark Knight*. From there he would revisit these themes as he went on to write the “Batman: Year One” story arc in the regular *Batman* title and a second run on *Daredevil*. He then introduced fans to his creator-owned crime series, *Sin City*, and authored the uber-violent *Hard Boiled*, the light-hearted monster movie-esque *Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot*, and *300*, a tale of the Spartans.

There’s no refuting the idea that *Dark Knight* was, in fact, dark. It was, brutally so at times. And without a doubt plenty of dark comics—way, way too many—followed. None of this, not the childhood love of Batman, the creator trying to shake-up the world of comics, nor the resident shadows in most of his work, means that he’s not aware of what came later.

Asked by MSNBC/Newsweek’s John Ness if he thought the average current comic was too real, Miller’s response was succinct:

“No, not too real. It’s too depressing. There’s a glumness to a lot of the stuff that’s out there,” he told them.

It’s also not as if he was the first creator to touch on contemporary themes with comics characters. The non-code drug issues, the death of Gwen Stacy, and the arrival of the Punisher in *Amazing Spider-Man* and Speedy’s involvement with drugs in the pages of *Green Lantern* pre-date *Dark Knight* by more than a decade. Despite their lasting impact, though, these books didn’t precipitate the deluge of bleak material *Dark Knight* did.

There’s a widely accepted notion that Miller seems to be a creator who enjoys shocking his audiences, but it doesn’t seem to be his *raison d’être*. He wants to shock not just for the sake of shocking, but to do so because he’s told a good story. This can’t be said of many of those who ape his work or follow the trends he creates, but it’s also hard to hold someone accountable for being poorly imitated. 🦇

UPON FURTHER REVIEW

"*Dark Knight* was one of the seminal works not just for DC, but for the industry as a whole," DC's Paul Levitz told the *New York Daily News*. "It was one of the works that began to deconstruct what it meant to be a hero. And that was an inspiration to at least a generation of writers creatively."

The question, of course, was "Can he do it again?" Here are a few selected reviews from the general media and comics circles about *The Dark Knight Strikes Again* #1:

MAXIM ONLINE

"Batman has gone from dark loner to borderline underground anarchist (George Clooney's celluloid Batman would wet his tights if he ever met this one in a dark alley)—joined by a new sidekick (Catgirl), a team of 'Batboys' (reformed members of the street gang he battled in *Returns*), and some pulled-from-retirement former Justice Leaguers (The Flash, the Atom). Although Bats himself doesn't even make an appearance until the final pages, the story is gripping and the artwork amazing. At a time when many great comic book writers are finally getting long-overdue recognition, Miller stands at the head of the class."

USA TODAY

"Batman hardly shows up at all, but readers with even the vaguest childhood memories will delight in Miller's wicked cameos of the Flash, Wonder Woman and others too obscure to mention."

NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE

"Surprisingly, Miller's artwork is one of *DK2*'s more obvious weaknesses. Though his line is cleaner this time around, it still takes a few pages to reacquire a taste for this look. His gritty illustration style was perfect for the urban blight of *DK1*'s Gotham, but it simply does not work as well with the larger, cosmic action of *DK2*. Miller also asks the evolution of digitalized art to come to his rescue on the splash-page action scenes."

BOSTON PHOENIX

"*DK2* is the original four-book miniseries's antithesis: a trip from darkness into light, with big, bold illustrations in place of *Returns*' claustrophobic grid and deliciously garish computer coloring by Miller's long-time partner Lynn Varley."

THE FOURTH RAIL.COM

"It's too early to say whether *DK2* will be as revered and important as *The Dark Knight Returns*, but Miller has delivered a sequel that certainly stands alongside the original as great comic-book reading. This is Miller's chance to expand the story, to make it less about the last days of Batman and more about a renaissance of heroism in the face of a dark world, and though the story is similar in tone to *Dark Knight*, it is quite different in approach and story. Believe the hype...*The Dark Knight Strikes Again* is worthy of the excitement it has generated."

COMICS WORTH READING.com

"He also seems to have a fairly low opinion of super-hero comics. The politics here are superficial, and the alliances, symbolism and events are obvious, as though super-hero readers couldn't be expected to handle a more nuanced story. This accounts for the 'it's gotta be a super villain' explanation readers are complaining about."

COMIC BOOK RESOURCES.com - Pipeline

"*DK1* was produced at the opening of the grim and gritty era. *Watchmen* was big. *DK1* was big. Darker looks at brightly garbed heroes were the way to go. Nowadays, we seem able to look at super-heroes in every way, but the vast majority of them tend still towards the darker, such as *The Authority*. The fun Silver Age throwbacks that some of us thought were coming a couple of years ago seem to have petered off. Maybe that's what *DK2* is about. *DK2* is a brighter story (both literally and figuratively). Is it Miller's intent to open the doors to a day where comics can find their sense of optimism again? Is this going to be Mark Waid's Silver Age paradise that Miller is ushering in?"

AN INTERVIEW

WITH BOB LUBBERS

conducted and edited by
Alberto Becattini



"Animatic" drawing, 1980s

Bob Lubbers in his Manhasset studio, 1955



Alberto Becattini: How and when did you become interested in art?

Bob Lubbers: I can tell you exactly. It was when I was a five-year-old kindergarten kid. Miss Stanford, my teacher at Public School 109 in Queens Village, seemed to have a special interest in getting me to paint cowboys and Indians. One day she brought me into NYC to meet her friend Robert W. Leigh, a painter of western action scenes. I was dazzled to see a real painter paint. Action drawings fascinated me, and comic strips such as Zane Grey's *Riders of the Purple Sage*, which ran daily in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, were an early inspiration to someday be an artist who could draw like that.

Becattini: Airplanes were another passion of yours, right?

Lubbers: It was inherited, I guess. My father had been a Sopwith Camel pilot in France in 1918, and by the time I was eight WWI fighters were tops on my drawing list. Schoolwork was just taking valuable time away from my sketchpad. It was that way through to graduation from high school in 1939.

Becattini: What were other important influences?

Lubbers: The old kid-radio programs such as *Jack Armstrong* and *Lights Out* caught me. Even the Jack Benny and Bob Hope shows had me picturing the cast and scenes in my mind. Movies were a tremendous influence on my story illustrations. I was awed by the swashbuckling Gables and Flynns, as well as by such Saturday serials as *Flash Gordon*. Frank Capra's *Lost Horizon* still fascinates me, and the cinematic breakthroughs of Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* inspired me to always look for a dramatic angle to play a

Raymond's *Flash Gordon* with those masterfully-rendered alien worlds and fabulous girls decorating each page; and *Terry and the Pirates*. Milt Caniff's stories and flashy, rugged art style were tops.

Becattini: Where did you receive your formal art training?

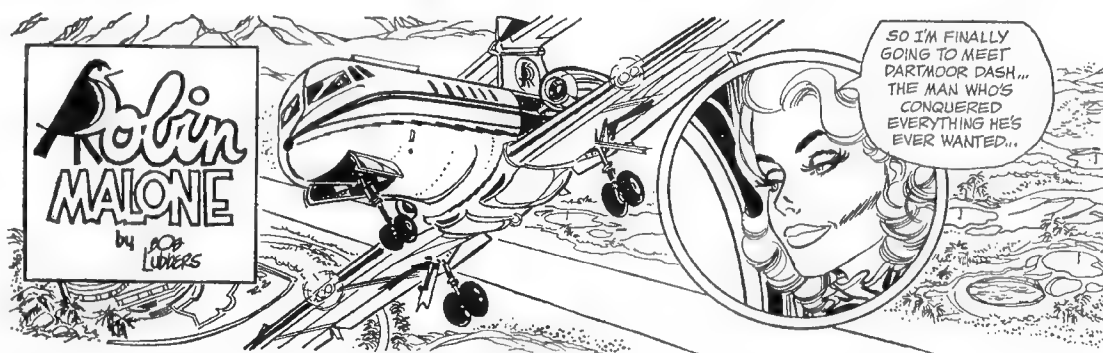
Lubbers: Right after graduation from high school, I joined the Art Students League in NYC. On the first day I was there—I'd signed up for life-drawing in George Bridgman's class—I walked in to see a nude model on the stand, surrounded by easels and artists. Not all easels were taken, and I sat at the one next to another high-school graduate. His name was Stan Drake. We were great friends from that day until Stan's death early in 1997. Back to Bridgman—the dynamics of the human figure he taught have stood me well in all the succeeding years. His concept of opposing masses was the key to drawing action.

Becattini: Tell me about your début in comics.

Lubbers: While I was still in high school, I cooked up a comic character called Reef Kincaid. He was a Captain Easy kinda tough-guy adventurer, cruising the tropics in his souped-up boat and tangling with smugglers and other bad guys—rescuing pretty girls. I got it ready for showing, during my semester at the Art Students League in NYC, then trucked down to Centaur Comics with high hopes and wobbly knees. George Weaver was the editor at Centaur. A big, friendly guy who welcomed me into his office, took me under his wing and bought that first sample story and art on the spot. Wow! I couldn't believe my luck. Six pages for six bucks a page. Well, he ran the feature for several months and even put the title in the feature list on the *Amazing-Man* cover. It wasn't exactly a baptism of fire. It got better—he gave me a couple of *Arrow* covers, and a shot at black and white wash illustrations for one of their slick magazines. George Weaver got the ball rolling in the right direction. A nice man. Another nice guy, Lew Glanzman, their ace cover and story artist, befriended me, a blubbering rookie, and gave me some

At 80 years old, Brooklyn-born Bob Lubbers is a genial, humorous and witty man, as well as a wonderfully versatile artist who can draw anything in his inimitable, alluring style, although girls—pretty girls—have always been his forte. In this conversation, the master draftsman reminisces about his glory days at Fiction House as well as about the rest of his shining 45-year-long career in comics and other branches of visual arts.

scene. Then there were the great illustrators N.C. Wyeth, Frank Schoonover, Dean Cornwell, and magazine illustrators like Noel Sickles, Al Parker, Coby Whitmore, Al Dorne. And the comics. The comics features in the Sunday papers were more important to me than all the movies. There was Hal Foster's *Prince Valiant*, my Sistine Chapel; Alex



The charming Robin Malone in her corporate jet © NEA, Inc.

LUBBER INTERVIEW

tips that really helped. We moved on to other publishers but, like the small world it is, we bumped into each other years later when we were in the service at some saloon somewhere and had a great reunion. I never saw him again.

Becattini: How did you eventually get to work for Fiction House in 1942?

Lubbers: Fiction House owner and publisher Thurman T. Scott lived but a few blocks away from our home in Manhasset, Long Island, and would occasionally walk to our railroad station for the NYC commute. So did my father, and one day they got to talking about my work. The next day I took my samples to Fiction House and they hired me on the spot. My freelance days were over!

Becattini: What was the atmosphere like at Fiction House?

Lubbers: That place was alive! That place was FUN. They set me up with a desk and a dazor light, a chair, a taboret, and all the paper I could decorate—and a chance to make a place for myself. Whew, those guys were good. Most had come from Jerry Iger's shop and were seasoned pros. On that first day they sat me next to Nick Viscardi, one of the drollest, funniest, most talented guys I've ever known. He was working on Señorita Rio. It was pure magic the way he controlled that big fat #7 Windsor Newton brush bulging with ink. Out of it he got the most delicate nuances of Rio's face and figure, then he'd juice it all up with velvety big blacks laid on with the same brush. I thought to

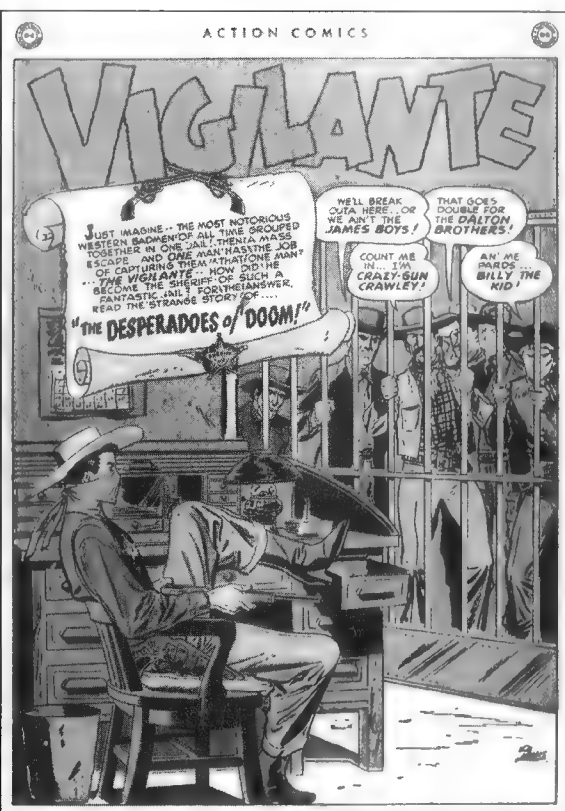
myself "what the hell am I doing here?" Gene Fawcette, I think it was, had given me something to do—I have no recollection of what—and I knew I had to get into gear and get something down that looked half decent. Gene was the great *Wings* cover airplane ace who I figured was the bullpen C.O. It was a struggle, but when Nick and Artie Saaf invited me to join them for lunch, the tension dissolved in a few beers and a pastrami on rye at Roth's deli. That was the first day of one of the best eras in my life.

Becattini: What strips did you draw during your first stint at Fiction House?

Lubbers: I forget the order but I think I started on "Wing Tips," or one of the other center-page features, for *Fight Comics*, maybe. Well, somehow or other I got onto *Space Rangers*, *Captain Terry Thunder*, *U. S. Rangers*, *Rip Carson*, I think [*likely Rip Regan*]. Whatever the sequence was I started to get the hang of it—and confidence. I even did some dry brush illustrations for their pulp features. Before too long, they put me on *Captain Wings*, working mainly from scripts by John Mitchell, an old and experienced writer with whom I had a wonderful relationship for many years.

Becattini: How many other artists were there in the Fiction House bullpen?

Lubbers: There were 20 or so in the shop and Nick Cardy, Artie Saaf, Johnny Celardo, Frank Doyle, Mike Peppe, Howard Larsen, Murphy Anderson, George Tuska



Early *Space Rangers* splash from *Planet* #46 (Jan 1947) © T. T. Scott, beautiful damsel in distress in this *Texan* splash from #2 (Oct 1948) © St. John, *Vigilante*, from *Action Comics* #129 (Feb 1949) © DC Comics



Injun Jones splash from *Blazing West* #5 (May-June 1949) © ACG, Western heroine Rhoda Trail from *Billy West* #8 (Nov 1950) © Standard, a splash from *Popular Romance* #8 (Aug 1950) © Standard

and I were the ringleaders of the fun. Except for Howard, who was 50 or so, we were some of the youngest in the shop, full of joie de vivre. Hey, I was still in my teens. We were the jokers. There was no Muzak so we pepped up the atmosphere and eased the stress by wise-cracking back and forth. For me, anyway, every day was a reunion with a lot to celebrate. If it bothered any of the others I never heard Mal Reiss [T.T. Scott's right-hand man] or [office manager] Jack Byrne up in the front office make a peep. They knew they had a good thing going. A happy and productive shop.

Becattini: Then the War burst...

Lubbers: ...And the fun ended. I got married on February 6, 1943, and on that very night my father handed me the Air Corps notice that had just arrived. On February 25 I left for service and put in three years. First as second radio operator on B-17s, and then I was transferred to the Air Transport Command, Pacific Theater. Upon discharge, in December 1945, Fiction House took me back to pick up where I'd left off. They got me started again on Captain Wings, and later Firehair, Camilla and Señorita Rio. All featuring girls. I loved to draw girls—leggy and busty—and Scotty liked to see them in his books.

Becattini: Was it at that point that you became an art director?

Lubbers: Well, they dubbed me "art director" a bit later and gave me a salary boost, but it was only a title. Direct? What? Draw faster? Cut the clowning? Everyone knew it was a farce. The bullpen ran itself as it always had. We

always checked out each other's work to see if we could get a new slant on page layouts, or a new way to handle folds, or some other little gem we could adapt to our own style. It was a team effort. Remember, we used no models, no photographs, no oil paint like the illustrators did that took a day and a half to dry and days to complete. The stuff just rolled off the top of our heads. Bang. There it was. No frills. Pencils and then Higgins ink.

Becattini: One of your assignments as an art director was drawing covers, "Good-Girl" covers.

Lubbers: I did a long string of covers for *Wings* and *Rangers*. Getting assigned on those covers was the goal of every good-girl artist. You could get big and splashy and load up with hips, thighs and headlights, and bondage situations—all that good stuff—and also you could color your stuff your own way. They're campy to me now because I hadn't learned to take my time and work hard at the draftsmanship. The over-all goal for me was to turn out as much as I could as fast as I could. The other cover guys—Dan Zolnerowich, Johnny, Nick, Artie, Lee Elias, Maurice Whitman and the champ, Joe Doolin—all took their time and it shows. I didn't know about lightboxes then, and if anyone needed to check draftsmanship by looking through from the reverse side it was me.

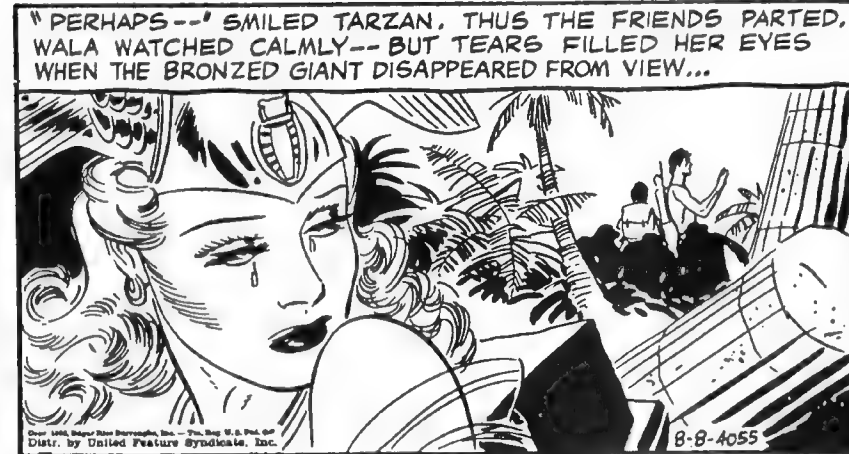
Becattini: Can you tell me something more about Doolin?

Lubbers: Joe Doolin was the patriarch. He set up on the far side of the pen, quietly grinding out his glorious covers

LUBBERS INTERVIEW



THE NEXT DAY THE MEN PREPARED TO LEAVE. STEVE WAS TOLD OF HIS PARTNER'S FATE, SO HE ALONE WAS GIVEN GOLD... PLEDGING NEVER TO RETURN.



Olga and Wala, two of the gorgeous girls Lubbers drew for the *Tarzan* January 19 and August 8, 1952, daily strips, © Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

and inside art. A loner, he worked, ate and commuted alone. He just didn't converse. A nice man, a body-builder who plugged away at his work isolated behind an invisible wall he put up that closed him off from us wise-guys.

Becattini: Rafael Astarita was another very good artist.

Lubbers: Yes, and a rare bird. Raf was Fiction House's only caped hero. You had to admire him. I mean, he was sixty years ahead of the vogue. Back then he was wearing black cloaks and droopy black wide-brimmed hats and black suits under them. Hey, that was different. He was brainy and witty—a classicist. Each of his panels was so painstakingly pencilled they could have been sent to the engraver as is. He gave short shrift to the work of us speed demons who were always looking for a better brush or pen point to quicken the pace. For him, each panel was a Rembrandt, and he had a hard time tolerating the "cartoony" stuff we did. In a magnificent gesture of disdain one day he inked in one of his Rembrandts with a toothpick. He made his point, The panel made the grade, and it cost me and Nick a dollar bet each that he couldn't do it.

Becattini: Other artists you have special memories of?

Lubbers: There was Al Walker, one of our staples, who drew Greasemonkey Griffin for *Wings*. A gentle soul who was overcome with a Will Eisner fetish. He once drew the

guts of a complicated panel as a reflection in a giant close-up of a button on Greasemonkey's fatigues. How's that for style? Then George Evans. We all agreed he was the champ at WWI airplanes and classic panels like Raf. He and Graham Ingels, a jovial guy in those days, were pals and had their own haunts. A hero of the gang was Howard Larsen, the senior citizen. He was an aging Clark Gable double with graying hair and streaks of genius. In one of our porno challenge matches he drew a baseball card that opened and revealed The Mighty Casey with a big pop-up bat. Charlie Sultan was the king of paste-up. He clipped every line drawing he could find in the print media. Cars, houses, guns, whatever, and if the script called for anything technical he'd hit his treasure chest and come up with a clip to paste in. We ragged him about it, but I have to admit his technical stuff looked better than ours.

Becattini: There were also two girls in the bullpen, Fran Hopper and Lily Renée.

Lubbers: Fran and Lily, two pioneers, two gals holding their own in a men-pen. They were talented and tolerant. Fran was a soft spoken petite blond who drew like a bandit. She never got into the wisecracking, but we could see her shoulders unable to conceal lots of stifled chuckles. Could she draw? Check out her fantastic good-girl work on *Glory Forbes*. And Lily, she was Fran's desk mate. A voluptuous brunette, quiet, and cloaked by a Doolin-like protective aura, but she was a top-notch artist and got to be a cover artist for *Planet Comics*. Both of them, I'm sure, would

BOB LUBBERS COMIC-BOOK CHECKLIST

by Alberto Becattini

(Thanks to Jerry Bails, Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr.
and the Grand Comics Database for their invaluable help)

ACTION COMICS (DC/National, 1949) – Vigilante #129, 130
ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN (ACG, 1949-50) – #6, 7, 10
AMAZING-MAN COMICS (Centaur, 1940-41) – Reef Kincaid #12, 14-22
THE ARROW (Centaur, 1940-41) – The Arrow #2, 3; Covers #1, 2
AUTHENTIC POLICE CASES (St. John, 1948) – Covers #4, 5
BILLY WEST (Standard, 1949-50) – Rhoda Trail #4, 7, 8
BLAZING WEST (ACG, 1949) – Injun Jones #5, Perils of the Old West #7
C-M-O COMICS (Centaur, 1942) – “Star Spangled” Branner #1, 2
CREEPY (Warren, 1965) – Creepy’s Loathsome Lore #2
THE DEFENDERS (Marvel, 1978) – The Defenders #61
FIGHT COMICS (Fiction House, 1942-43/46) – Rip Carson #22-24; Senorita Rio #45, 46; Cover #45
FIREHAIR COMICS (Fiction House, 1948) – Cover #1
THE HUMAN FLY (Marvel, 1978) – The Human Fly #16; Covers #13-16
JUNGLE COMICS (Fiction House, 1946-47/50) – Captain Terry Thunder #80-85; Camilla #97-99
LIBERTY SCOUTS (Centaur, 1941) – Liberty Scouts #2, 3
LOVELORN (ACG, 1950) – #8, 9
MAN OF WAR (Centaur, 1941-42) – Liberty Guards #1, 2
MOVIE COMICS (Fiction House, 1946-47) – Covers & Art #1-4
NORTHWEST MOUNTIES (St. John, 1948-49) – Covers #1-3
PLANET COMICS (Fiction House, 1946-47) – Flint Baker/Space Rangers #44-47
POPULAR ROMANCE (Standard, 1950) – #7
RANGERS COMICS (Fiction House, 1943-51) – The Commando Rangers #9;
U.S. Rangers #10, 19 (?), 23 (?), 26 (?), 28 (?); Firehair #30-52; Commando Kill #59; Covers #38, 40-49
SPY AND COUNTERSPY (ACG, 1949) – #1
THE TEXAN (St. John, 1948-49) – The Texan #2; Covers #1-3
THRILLING ROMANCES (Standard, 1950) – #7, 8
TOPS (St. John, 1949) – #1, 2
TOYLAND COMICS (Fiction House, 1947) – Covers [& Art?] #1-4
THE TWILIGHT ZONE (Gold Key, 1967) – #19
WINGS COMICS (Fiction House, 1942-44/46-50) – Captain Wings #27-35, 47 (?), 48 (?), 70-111;
Covers #74-109, 112
WORLD FAMOUS HEROES MAGAZINE (Centaur, 1941-42) – #1-4



Lubbers' Tarzan in action © Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

Glamour International 26: The Good Girl Art of Bob Lubbers

\$34.95

Edited by Alberto Beccattini

review by Paul Gravett

The latest edition of the long-running Italian magazine *Glamour International* spotlights 'The Good Girl Art of Bob Lubbers' in a deluxe 100-page, 12 inch by 12 inch square format. Lubbers himself provides the revealing commentary tracing his fascinating life and forty-year career in comics, accompanied by photos, sketches, a host of brand new color illustrations and covers, plus some specially colored panel selections of his 'Good Girl Art' from his Fiction House days and from his newspaper strips, *Tarzan*, *Long Sam* written by Al Capp, *The Saint*, *Secret Agent X-9*, *Robin Malone* and *L'il Abner*. Bob credits the good fortune of being in the right place at the right time for keeping him busy, jumping from one series to the next or juggling several at once. But this modesty overlooks his constantly fresh and lively draughtsmanship, his crisp storytelling skills and his particular lifelong love affair with the female form, qualities that have kept him in constant demand. With his passions for playing music and golf, his encounters with showbiz stars, presidents and beautiful models, his witty and moving anecdotes about the comics industry and his current success at devising crossword puzzles, Bob comes across as a genial, big-hearted man, who has always enjoyed his life and developing a variety of talents. This book concludes with the most thorough checklist of his work to date, eleven pages meticulously compiled by editor Alberto Beccattini with help from many experts, spanning all of his comics from his early "Reef Kincaid" strips in Centaur's 1940 *Amazing-Man Comics* to his work for Marvel in 1978 and AC Comics' and A List Comics' assorted recent reprints. The whole production is a true labor of love and a splendid tribute to one of the great American comic book and comic strip artists. Highly recommended. 

have felt more comfortable in one of today's office settings. Not that they got any personal needling, but just having to hear the stuff that went on would be ripe for today's harassment laws. You couldn't have a Fiction House like that today, more's the pity. Or maybe not.

Beccattini: Fiction House also bought art from freelancers. Did you get to have a look at their work?

Lubbers: You bet. Once a week or so we'd all take a break to slobber over what the freelancers brought in. Guys like Al McWilliams, Al Williamson, Reed Crandall, Al Hollingsworth, Bob Powell and Matt Baker. Frank Frazetta, just a teenager then, would stop by with his sample book on his character Panther Girl. And what a girl. We knew he had the right stuff, but couldn't conceive of the successes ahead in his career. I met Lou Fine once but never met Will Eisner. They were the consensus best in the business.

Beccattini: Why did you leave Fiction House in 1949?

Lubbers: Actually they started down-sizing and we were free to cut the string and go to freelancing. We'd all had a gut feeling for a long time that the game was ending.



The Saint Sunday page, October 11, 1959, ghosted by Bob Lubbers © New York Herald Tribune, Inc.

Something strange I've wondered about lately: Why didn't Scotty try at least one super-hero? We never got there. Not a single one. Fiction House fell behind and missed the boat. After all, DC and Marvel are still going. I paid eight bucks for my chair, and off we went. Johnny and I wanted an office in town, and so did Stan Drake, my lifelong buddy who was in advertising then, so we teamed up to split the rent on a small office in the city where we could be in the center of the action. We lucked out at 545 Fifth Avenue (at 45th Street) on the eighth floor. St. John Publishing happened to be at the end of the hall. What a break. Johnny and I picked up some good jobs there. We hit Standard, DC and others and scored. I remember feeling good about some romance stories I did, and westerns—The Vigilante, Rhoda Trail—but until I see reprints, as I have recently, that era's pretty much a blur. We were there only about a year. When I landed *Tarzan* in 1950 the party was over. The great camaraderie gone forever. Fiction House was gone, our Fifth Avenue office dissolved. From then on I hermitized myself in my home studio. Some of us got together now and then, but our paths went in different directions. Even so, a few of those friendships endured for life. But the glory days of Fiction House would never be revived.

Becattini: How did you get to draw the *Tarzan* strip?

Lubbers: Burne Hogarth was quitting *Tarzan*, and the feature was up for grabs. Raeburn Van Buren, the great magazine illustrator and artist on the *Abbie an' Slat's* strip, knew of my work, and he managed to convince United Features to hire me along with his son Dick, an aspiring writer, to produce the *Tarzan* dailies and Sundays. I signed a three-year contract. The dream-of-a-lifetime come true. In fact, I had no real insight into Tarzan's character, as I had never read a Burroughs book. To me, Tarzan was only Hal Foster and Johnny Weissmuller, and I strove to get the feel of Foster in my strips. Plenty of action, interplay with jungle animals, colorful backgrounds and as many exotic girls as Dick's scripts would allow.

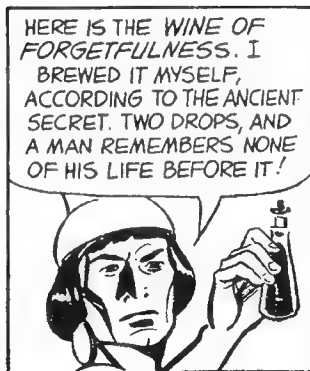
Becattini: From *Tarzan*, you moved on to *Long Sam*. How did you meet Al Capp?

Lubbers: Al and I had been introduced at a National Cartoonist Society meeting, but just in passing. Then one day in November 1953, as my *Tarzan* contract was nearing renewal, he called me, inviting me to his Waldorf suite for a chat about a new project he thought might interest me. He had seen my pretty girl stuff and thought his scripts and my

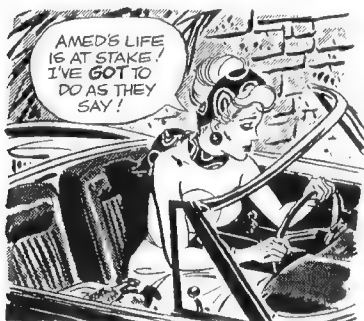


LUBBERS INTERVIEW

THE SAINT



Saint dailies ghosted by Lubbers, imitating John Spranger's style, July 9-11, 1959, © New York Herald Tribune, Inc.



A selection of X-9 girls from 1963-66 daily strips. Clockwise: Tanya, Sherri, Tommi and Mira, © King Features Syndicate, Inc.

art would be a happy combo. That was the start of our 25-year alliance. I let my *Tarzan* contract expire, surrendering the ape-man into the capable hands of my friend Johnny Celardo, and started working on *Long Sam*, starring a backwoods beauty isolated in a hidden valley by her man-hating Maw to protect her from the evil world outside. After about three years, I was also giving Al a hand on *Li'l Abner*, adding draftsmanship to the charmingly grotesque pencil layouts of his long-time assistant, Andy Amato. Al would ink only the eyes, nose and mouth of the major characters, leaving the rest to a variety of inkers who were passing through his studio on Beacon Street in Boston.

Becattini: In the late 1950s, you ghosted on a few syndicated strips, right?

Lubbers: Only for short episodes. The first I did was *The Heart of Juliet Jones*. In September 1956, Stan Drake was involved in the tragic car accident in which the great Alex Raymond lost his life. Stan survived the terrible crash, but he suffered injuries needing a couple of weeks from which

by LESLIE CHARTERIS

to recover enough to get back to his board. Sylvan Byck, Stan's editor—and later mine—at King Features, allowed me to do the strip for my pal. At best I was a poor imitation, but the deadlines went on uninterrupted until Stan was back in the saddle and

moving steadily on to greatness. Later on, in 1959, I worked again for King, drawing the last two weeks of *Rusty Riley* when Frank Godwin died. I also accepted to take over the drawing on *The Saint* for the Herald Tribune Syndicate while John Spranger, the artist, was recovering from an illness. That was a troubled period, because Al Capp had lost interest in *Long Sam*, and I feared for the strip, which I was now writing myself.

Becattini: How come you took over *Secret Agent X-9* at King Features while still drawing *Long Sam* for United Features?

Lubbers: Early in 1960, Sylvan Byck called me, saying that Mel Graff was giving up X-9, and asking if I'd like to take over. I accepted, and for the next six years wrote and drew the strip, using the pen name "Bob Lewis" for obvious reasons. Until *Long Sam* finally folded in late 1962, I was writing and drawing three different yarns each week. One for *Long Sam* dailies, one for Sundays and one for X-9 dailies, and sometimes inking bits of *Li'l Abner* and its "strip within the strip," *Fearless Fosdick*. All by myself. No help.

Becattini: In the X-9 strip, and later in *Robin Malone*, you managed to draw quite a few pretty girls.

Lubbers: It had always been tough trying to back up *Long Sam* with other beautiful girls, whereas with X-9 I wrote in all the girls I wanted, moving the settings all around the globe. From X-9, I moved on to *Robin Malone*, that I created for NEA. They had originally asked me for a pretty-girl story strip like Stan's *Juliet Jones*, but I had something more adventurous in mind. Robin was the inheritor of a vast empire of enterprises built by her late husband. She was beautiful, bright, dedicated, with a fabulous figure. The strip was loaded with pretty girls, worthy antagonists, romance, drama, action, humor and a cliffhanger every day. Unfortunately, story strips were losing out in constantly shrinking comics page space, and TV had taken hold of readers' time. *Robin Malone* was cancelled when my three-



LUBBERS INTERVIEW

Lubbers' "Vampire page" for *Creepy* #2 (1965), script by Archie Goodwin, © Harris Publications. Cover to *The Human Fly* #13 (Sept 1978), inks by Bob McLeod, © Marvel Comics. *Human Fly* page from #16 (December 1978), inks by Ricardo Villamonte, © Marvel Comics

year contract expired, in March, 1970. *Robin* is still my favorite. I think I was at my peak then.

Becattini: The strip had a very unusual ending, if I'm not mistaken.

Lubbers: You're right. In the last yarn my assistant writer and old friend Stu Hample and I did, Robin was "coerced" into attending a farewell party hosted by her arch-enemy, Sigfried Mushroom. The whole cast attended. Robin was last seen plunging to her death from a skyscraper penthouse. Was it really her? Anyway, the final strip bids our personal farewell in a message ("R.I.P. R.M.") disguised in the NYC traffic pattern far below the penthouse party scene.

Becattini: Were you still doing *Li'l Abner* at that point?

Lubbers: Not only was I, but when *Robin* folded, Al Capp, due to his various enterprises calling him away from his studio, asked me to do all the drawing. So I took it from Andy's rough layouts, dailies and Sundays, through finished pencils, inking, lettering, and Sunday color guides from 1970 through the next seven years. A keen eye might detect my morse code initials "BL" (—•• for "B" and •—• for "L") in many of the strips, pages, and other enterprises involving Capp's characters during that period.

Becattini: Did you ever go back to comic books?

Lubbers: During the sixties, while I was doing X-9, I drew a page for Warren Publishing's comics magazine *Creepy*. It was a thing about vampires, I think, and I drew it

on the Craftint doubletone paper I had been using on X-9 since the beginning, segueing out of Mel Graff's style. Still in the mid-sixties, I did a story for Western Publishing, a mystery story [published in *The Twilight Zone* #19, 1967], and then I did nothing else for comic books until 1978. By that time I had left *Li'l Abner* and Al Capp and was working full time in the advertising art field, doing "animatics," that is, tightly-rendered storyboards for TV test commercials. Well, it happened that Stan Lee, an old colleague, hooked me up straight away with Jim Shooter, his editor at Marvel, who actually gave me the work. There were a few Spider-Man promotional pages, a Ka-Zar story [scheduled for *Marvel Premiere*, it seems never to have been published], but mainly *Human Fly* pages and covers. Just pencilling, but familiar territory and a great feeling to get back into the old game after almost thirty years. The foreshortened dynamic super-heroes were fun and came easy, and the inkers did a great job. I was tempted to give it a run, but there was no way to fit it in long-term. That brief lull in the segue to my advertising career lasted only a few weeks so I had to check out once again.

Becattini: When did you retire, and what have you been doing since?

Lubbers: In 1989, when both I and Grace were 67, I decided it was time to call it quits. I closed down my long career, and set up retirement in our neighboring town of Port Washington. But I haven't been idle. In 1994, our golf club offered me a wall in the Pro Shop to paint a mural in

LUBBERS INTERVIEW



(left) Special Li'l Abner art, drawn and signed "Al Capp" by Lubbers, © Capp Enterprises. (below) Lubbers' recent, ironic reinterpretation of his classic heroes and heroines.

acrylics. It features pretty girls in '20s golf fashions. A series of *Tarzan* paintings in acrylics is under way. And since 1973 I have been creating crossword puzzles, which have appeared daily and Sunday in the *New York Newsday*, syndicated nationally by the Creators Syndicate, as well as in several books and magazines. Puzzle-making is big time. On computer, then a macro gets them onto diskettes for mailing. They keep the brain cells working.

Becattini: Thanks a lot, Bob. It's been a pleasure to talk to you.

Lubbers: Thank you, Alberto. It's been fun to bring back good memories. And let me thank all the fans who saved those old magazines we worked on. We never dreamed they'd be collectors' items someday. I tell you, Alberto, it's a weird but warm feeling to see stuff you've so long forgotten displayed so handsomely in reprint comics, books and magazines. What a surprise after all these years. Not gone and not forgotten. What could be sweeter! 🍷



VOICES OF PATRIOTISM?

A CBM Quick Survey

by J.C. Vaughn

The creators behind characters that are often viewed to be patriotic sometimes must walk a fine line between finding the symbolism at the core of a character and being perceived as little more than purveyors of propaganda. The lines are not as clearly cut as they were at the outset of World War II when patriotic heroes were in their heyday.

The post-war realities and the make-us-cringe-now caricatures of former enemies who are now our allies and trading partners has made modern creators wary of casting opponents (and later themselves) in such simplistic, tainted, broad strokes. In light of the recent increase in demonstrations of patriotism, we took a few minutes with several different creators who have handled such characters.

Screenwriter/producer Jeph Loeb is the current writer of *Superman*. He is also the author of *Batman: The Long Halloween*, *Batman: Dark Victory*; *Daredevil: Yellow* and the upcoming *Spider-Man: Blue*. Longtime *Flash* scribe Mark Waid recently left a staff position at CrossGen, where he still writes *Ruse*, and will write *Fantastic Four* beginning later this year. Dan Jurgens is the creator with the most recent long tenures on both *Superman* (in the '90s) and *Captain America* (just ended). He's currently writing *Thor*. Former Superboy writer and Marvel Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter wrote *The Avengers* for Marvel. It was recently announced that he was returning to write that team again in an upcoming mini-series.

CBM: As a creator, what difficulties come with working on a character who is or who is perceived to be a patriotic character?

JEPH LOEB: Well, the obvious ones which come with the subject of patriotism. In the case of *Superman*, where it was once clearly "Truth, Justice and The American Way," we have a responsibility to realize that the "American" way is just as much "the French" way or "the British" way or the "Icelandic" way—or in the case of the DCU, the "Martian" way or the "Daxamite" way. In other words, the principles of freedom from want, freedom from hate, freedom to practice religion are now as much the "human" way as anything else. So the writer has to find how to best achieve what the character stands for in a world market as opposed to only a domestic (i.e., U.S.) market.

JIM SHOOTER: None, as far as I'm concerned. If that's the character's nature, then, as a writer, it is incumbent upon you to keep the character true to his or her nature. I think it's easy to write a patriotic character, because it's pretty easy to figure out what they'd do in any given situation. It should

not be any more difficult than writing a character with any other strong trait. Ask any comics writer to write a scene with Uncle Scrooge. Give them no more direction than that. Would not every one of them write a clever, miserly bit for Scrooge? Comic book writers are called upon all the time to write very complex, very human, very real characters for whom there are many conflicts, gray areas and split-decision choices. A flag-waving "God bless America" character (or "God bless France" character, or "God bless Latvia" character, etc.) is pretty easy to suss out.

MARK WAID: Trying to strike a balance between earnest and corny—though in this post 9-11 era where a guy with four flags on his car can pull up next to a guy with three flags on his car and call him a towel-head, I don't know that it's possible to go over the top now.

DAN JURGENS: I think the biggest trap is not to sound corny or antiquated. Let's face it, 9-11 reawakened a certain sense of patriotism out there that was totally absent before that. It's sad, but those enduring qualities of truth, justice and the American way were considered outdated for modern

VOICES OF PATRIOTISM?

comics. As our audience becomes smaller and less representative of mainstream American society, I have no doubt that sensibility will soon return.

CBM: When you started your run on Avengers, the nation was in a period where it wasn't widely considered cool to be patriotic. Did that affect your handling of Captain America in that book, and if so, how?

SHOOTER: I saw, and still see, Cap as a champion of the ideals of America rather than as a patriot. Freedom is always cool. Other writers often make Cap into a champion of the government.

CBM: Did the times affect your handling of Captain America one way or the other, and if so, how?

WAID: Did writing Cap during the '90s affect my handling of the character? It would have, since I really, truly wanted to write stories about a man who stood for something that meant both nothing and everything all at once. Unfortunately, that's not what the then-current Editor-in-Chief wanted to see—"Captain America doesn't have to be about America, Spider-Man isn't about spiders"—so I never really got a chance to tackle any of that. I'm both rooting for and jealous of new Cap writer John Reysieck in that he's got the first real shot since World War II at making Captain America a true cultural icon.

CBM: How important is the patriotic element to each of those characters?

JURGENS: With Cap, vital. With Superman, less so. Both are willing to serve American interests and interact with America presidents to do so, though I can't conceive that Superman would ever be the presidential stooge and errand boy that Frank Miller portrays. Both are independent thinkers who see a very clear line that differentiates right from wrong.

CBM: Superman has had numerous periods of obvious, visual patriotism, and other less obvious, more internationalist approaches. Both really seem to be part of the character. How do you see it?

LOEB: This is the power of the character. More so than Batman, X-Men or Spider-Man, Superman has achieved a notoriety throughout the world as the very best that we can be. So, it matters little to the *character*. His views are about the human condition, not necessarily about the American condition. That's not to say that the American Way isn't still a vital and true view of how to live one's life, but in a world that is traveling at cyber-speed, we are one people. And if Superman can inspire us to achieve a higher good, that works on so many more levels than a flag.

CBM: Are the concerns similar with writing Superman and Captain America, or are they entirely different?

JURGENS: I see them as entirely different characters. For one thing, while Superman is a leader, he isn't a rally the troops sort of guy that Cap is. Also, Cap's sensibilities are defined more by American qualities while Superman's are a bit more global in nature.

CBM: What's the worst mistake you think a writer handling an iconic, patriotic character can make?

WAID: Besides having him stand for a WASP America? Trying to stir patriotism in the breast of 40-year-olds rather than honestly connecting with the audience of Generation Y. Gen-Xers at least had *some* concept of JFK, Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, but to readers in their teens and twenties, those men may as well be Caesar and Lincoln for all the relevance they hold. And that's not a slam at all—that's just being realistic. Each generation grows up with less of a love for country and heroism than the one previous.

LOEB: To assume that the way we think is the way things should be. And that holds true to any sort of writing. Television, film, music—it all can have a point of view, but that point of view can't be the *only* way to see how to live one's life. As a white, Jewish, man, my own personal experiences are going to be different from (insert any variable). But, that is what makes the medium so powerful. For Superman's 50th birthday, DC licensed the character out to any country who wanted to tell a Superman story with their own language and style. I remember seeing Teddy Christianson's (*House of Secrets*) version that was only published in Denmark. It was truly extraordinary because (well, for one, Teddy is brilliant) but, for the purposes of this discussion, because he embraced the character and then made it uniquely Danish. I wish DC could collect those editions (I think I've seen a Hong Kong version as well) and show the world the way Superman can be, not only in other languages but as an art form in different cultures.

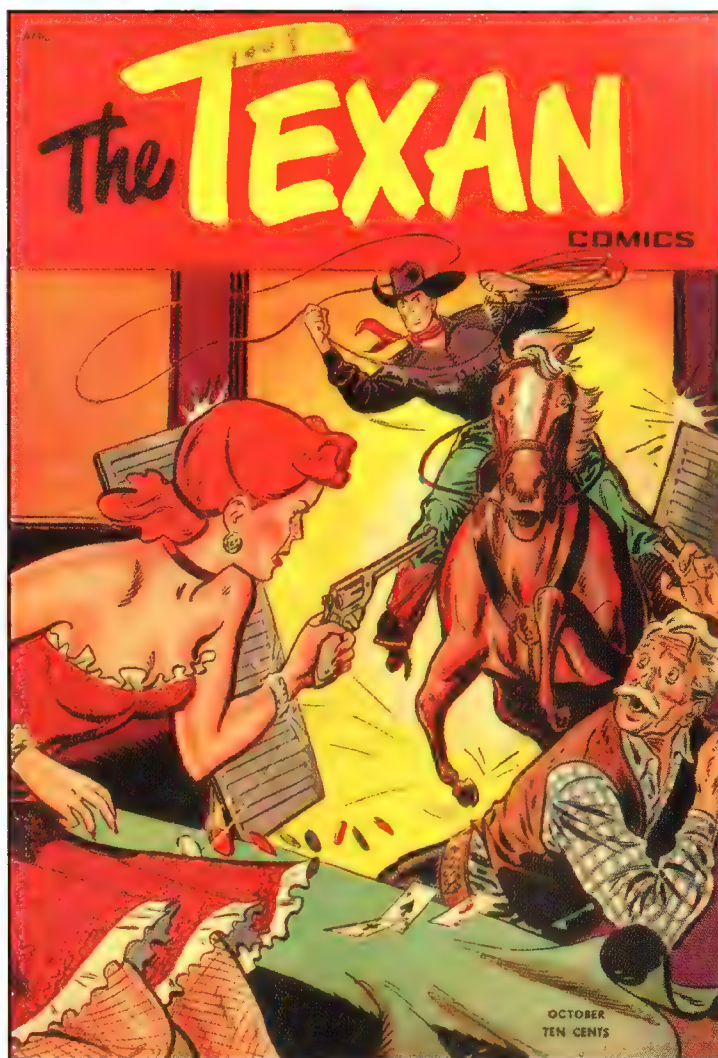
JURGENS: Probably to make them too subservient to a national interest. Patriotism doesn't always mean going lockstep in line with the prevailing attitude at the time. Sometimes it means standing up to a more popular person, group, idea or thought. Both have proven quite capable of doing so. 

Do you have an opinion on patriotic characters? Drop us an e-mail at cbm@gemstonepub.com and let us know what you think!



Good-Girl Art on the cover to Wings #95 (Jul 1948) © T. T. Scott.

A red-haired saloon beauty graces the cover to The Texan #2 (Oct 1948) © St. John.



Firehair cover to Rangers #46 (Apr 1949) © T. T. Scott.



Firehair splash from Rangers #46 (Apr 1949) © T. T. Scott.



COLOR GALLERY

Human Fly
page from
#16 (Dec
1978), inks
by Ricardo
Villamonte,
© Marvel
Comics.

(left) Long
Sam's first
Sunday
page,
released
June 6,
1954, ©
United
Feature
Syndicate.



(above) Bob Lubbers and Alberto Becattini
at Bob's house in Port Washington, October
1999. (right) Detail of Lubbers' mural
painting for Port Washington Golf Club.



COLOR GALLERY



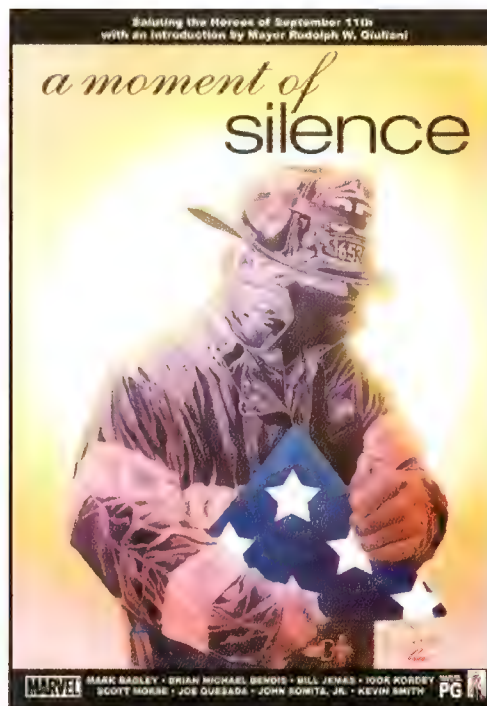
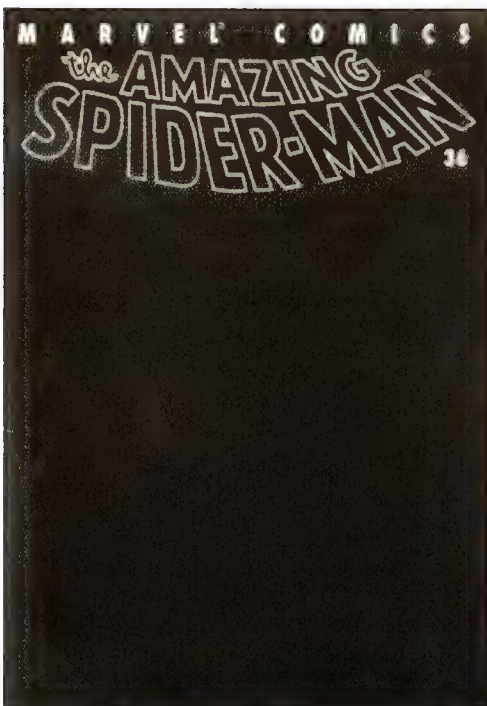
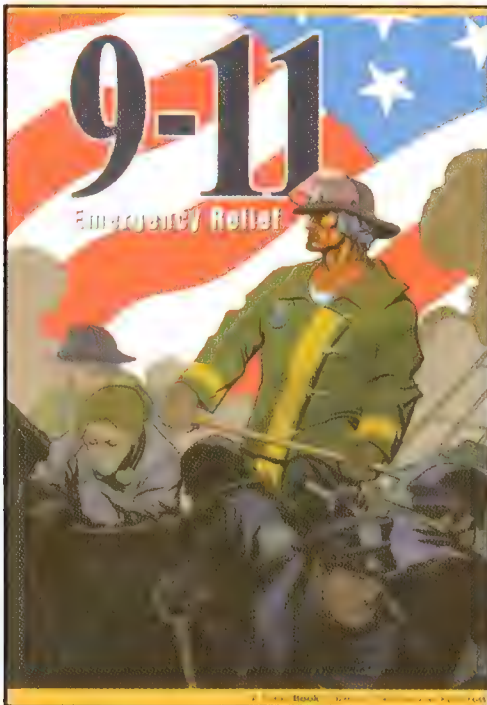
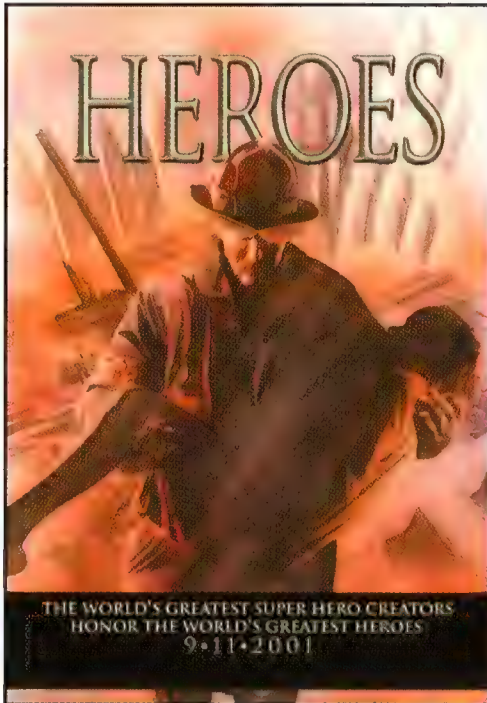
THE COMICS INDUSTRY RESPONDS

It started, appropriately enough, with *Heroes*.

In the days after the attacks of September 11, 2001, the comic book industry answered the call with tributes in the form of fundraisers and stories, utilizing the fictional characters and true-life tales.

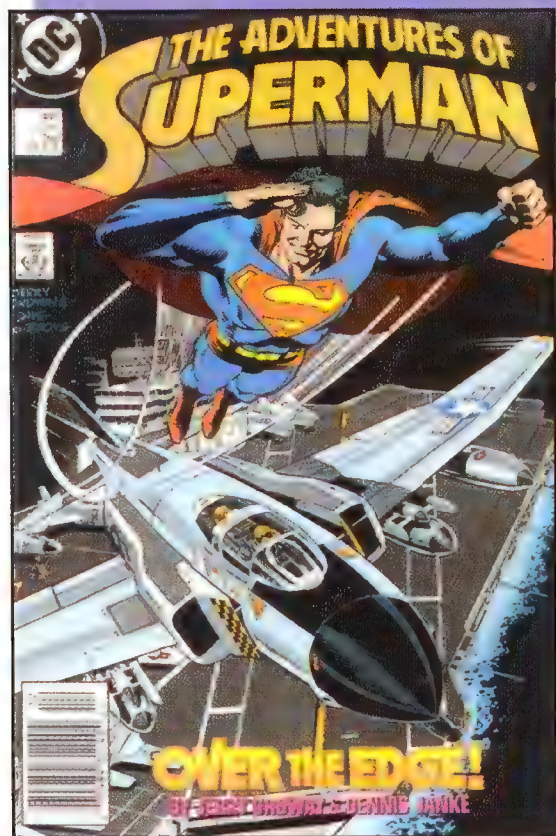
Within days of the attack many of the benefit books had been announced.

Marvel's magazine of pin-ups, *Heroes*, came first. It was followed by *9-11 Emergency Relief* from Alternative Press, the two-volume *9-11* jointly published by Chaos, Dark Horse and Image (Volume 1) and DC (Volume 2). Marvel added a poignant story in *Amazing Spider-Man* #36 and several real world-inspired tales in *A Moment of Silence*, and Crusade's *Shi: Through the Ashes* is due at press time.

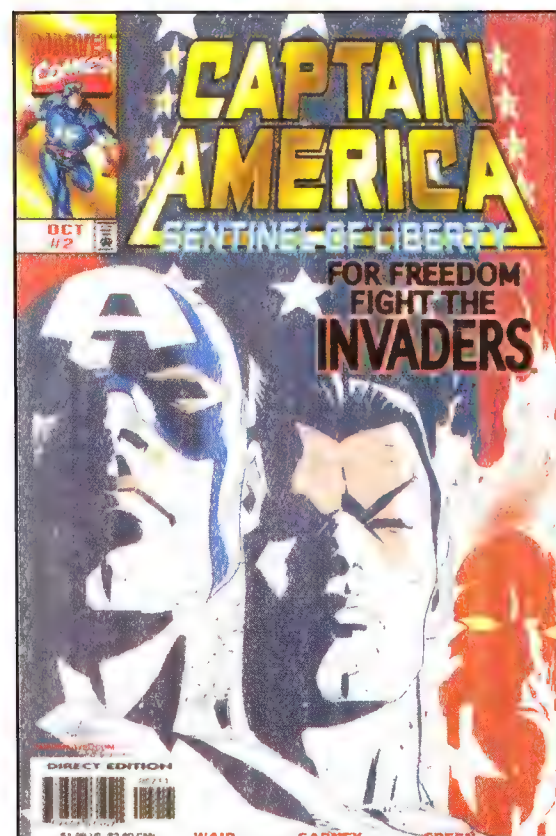




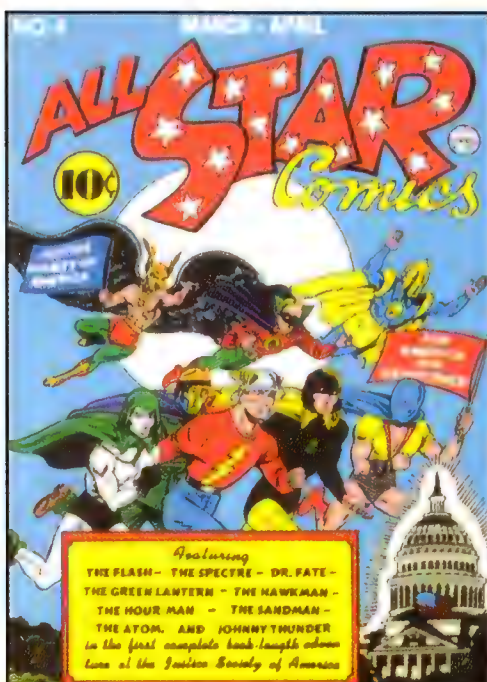
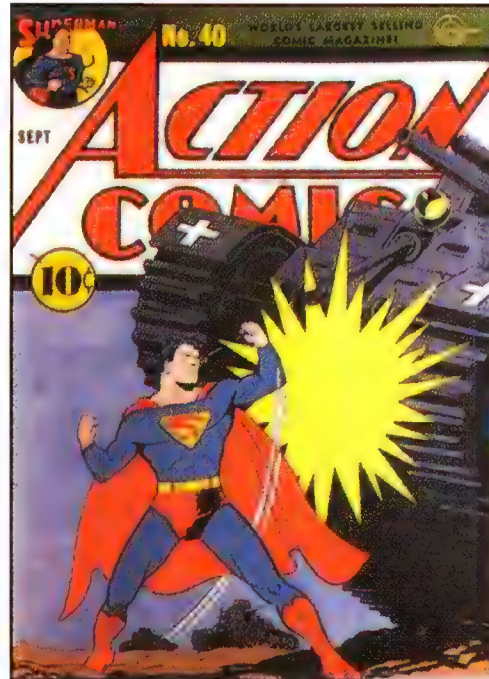
PATRIOTS, FRONT AND CENTER!



ON THIS AND THE FOLLOWING GALLERY PAGES ARE EXAMPLES OF PATRIOT-THEMED COVERS, FROM THE RECENT PAST AND FROM WORLD WAR II

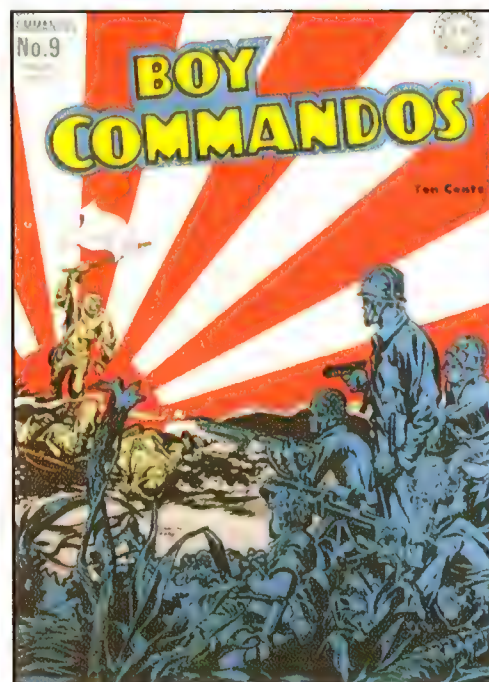
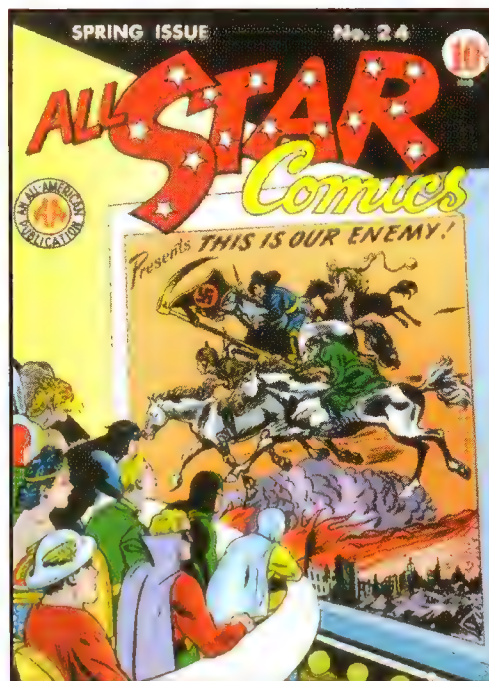
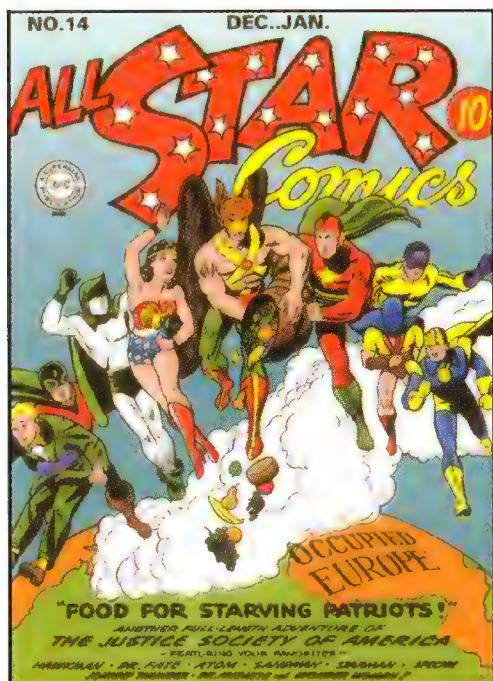


COLOR GALLERY



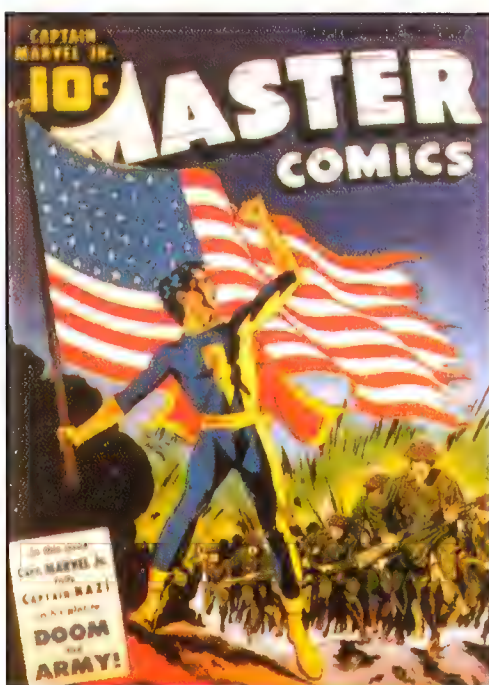


COLOR GALLERY



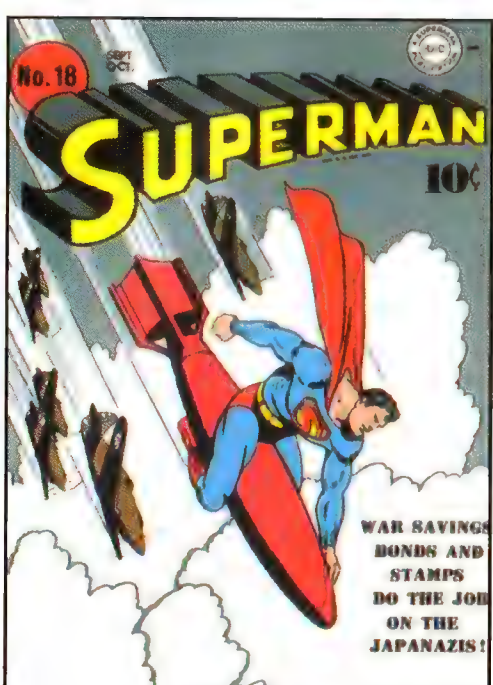
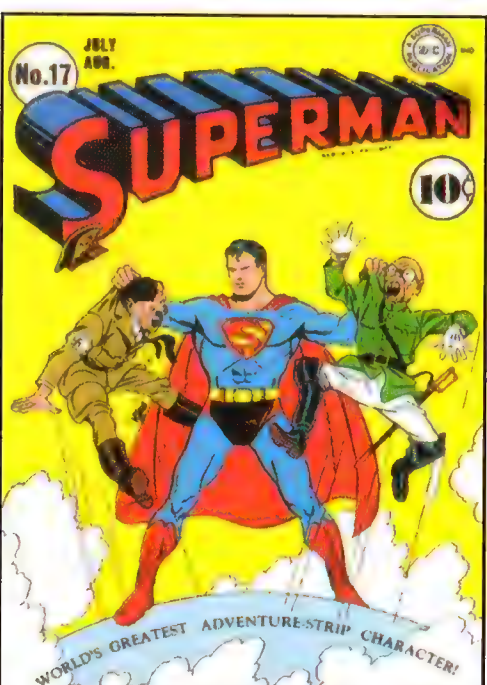
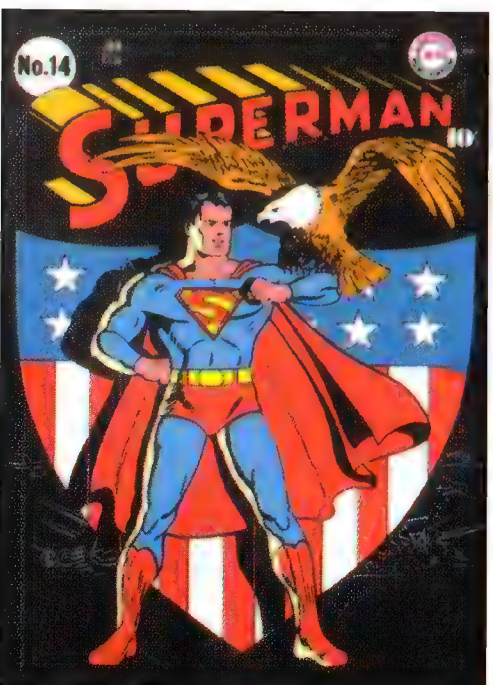
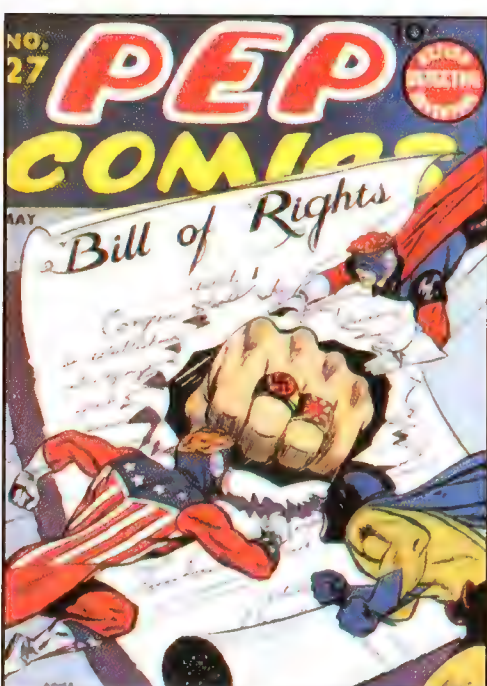
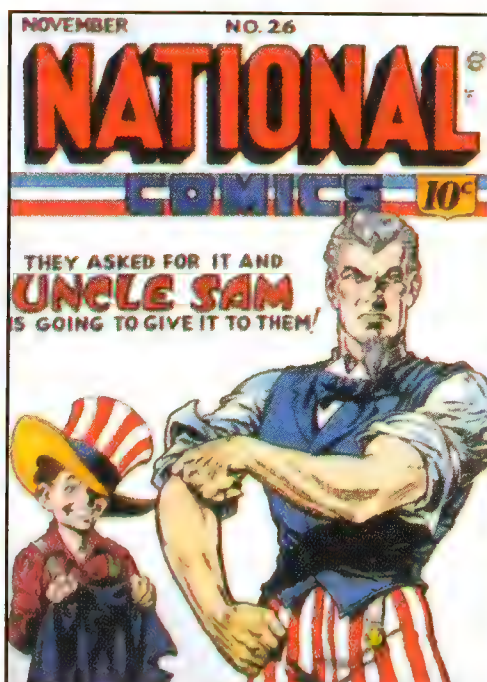
© Respective Holders

COLOR GALLERY





COLOR GALLERY



THE BEST OF

Part Three of Three

ALL WORLDS

George Perez INTERVIEW

by Bill Baker

Editor's note: In CBM #86 we kicked off Bill Baker's extensive interview with artist George Perez by focusing on his stints on The Avengers and the upcoming Avengers/JLA crossover. Then in CBM #89 we turned our attention to his role in creating The New Teen Titans and Crisis on Infinite Earths at DC with writer Marv Wolfman. Now we're taking a look at his work on Wonder Woman, the first regular title on which he also served as writer, and we finish by looking at the creative process and his art itself.

CBM: What about *Wonder Woman*? What drew you to that character, and how was the whole new version of that character developed?

Perez: Well, originally I had an idea for a *Wonder Woman* story arc, a contest, a challenge of the gods—which ended up being the 10th through 14th issues of the book, I believe. Then, when *Crisis* had come, now they made that moot by devolving *Wonder Woman*, so that she'd be started anew. And I thought no more of it until I saw that John Byrne had gotten to relaunch *Superman*, Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli were working on *Batman: Year One*, and I just thought, "You know, it's really a shame that *Wonder Woman* isn't getting the treatment that she deserves."

When I went [into DC's offices around then], and talked to a then-editor of the *Wonder Woman* title, she was *not* happy with what was being planned. Some people had come in, I believe even Marv Wolfman, and wanted to make *radical* changes to it. But it wouldn't resemble [the icon], and after the Mike Sekowsky era they really wanted to hold on to the recognizable character of *Wonder Woman*. They had the writer and they didn't particularly care for what he [wanted] to do, but right now there was no one else. They had an artist who was probably more known for drawing cheesecake, so chances are you're going to be getting a lot of gratuitous T&A shots of a character who's supposed to be a feminist icon, [at least] to some degree. And after sitting there for an hour or so, just listening to this, I opened up my mouth to Janice Race, who was the editor [of the book] and said, "Maybe I can draw the book for the first six issues or so? And I have some ideas. I'd like to talk with the writer, maybe we can work that out?" because she and I had

already talked about some of the things I'd thought of for *Wonder Woman*.

[That was] the first time I had ever been kissed by an editor. [General laughter] She went over to Dick Giordano, and told him, "George is interested in doing *Wonder Woman*!" That was the first time I ever was kissed by an Editor-in-Chief. [Still more laughter]

And [then] I talked to the writer, Greg Potter, since I had editorial approval. The week after [my expressing interest in the book] Janice Race was no longer there, and Karen Berger came in. But Karen was also strongly looking towards my take on the character. So I went to Greg [with my ideas], and [while] there were some aspects of his plot that remained, [there's] a *lot* that was changed. The biggest change [I made] was the *heavier* reliance on the mythology—*Wonder Woman* was already on Man's World by the end of the first issue in Greg's original run. I extended that [by including] more of an involvement of the gods. And, when *Wonder Woman* does reach Man's World in Greg's original plot she ended up [being] attacked by some men who tried to rape her the minute she hit Man's World, and she finds refuge—and I can't remember how, because I don't think any of these guys would stand a chance against her, she'd beat the hell out of them or whatever—she ends up befriended by this priest, and she stays at this home for wayward girls. And I thought, "Oi! If this isn't the *worst* example of how a woman who's supposed to be a champion comes into Man's World," I couldn't think of anything else. I couldn't believe that would really work.

So I created the Julia Kapatelis character, and other things. Also the reincarnation aspect, the original idea, was

GEORGE PEREZ

his, although I put a different spin on it. Originally, every one of those Amazons were murdered by men, so they were reincarnated with a total anger and hostility towards men, to which I said, "No. *Again*, that's a bad example to set. That doesn't work for me!" So those, and a few other modifications, and I think Greg felt that this wasn't the book for him, and [he left].

But my involvement from issue three was what Marv Wolfman has always said I should do: Start doing stories from scratch. So I became the sole plotter, with Len Wein strictly doing dialogue. There were some points where, [since] Len was from the old school, he and I disagreed on some of the dialogue handling. And I talked with Karen about that, so eventually I took over the dialoguing. But her feeling was that, since Len was an experienced writer and [I was still learning, I] needed more work just to make me the best possible writer I could be. And at the start of the series, that's probably not the best time to be working with someone who might still have some rough edges.

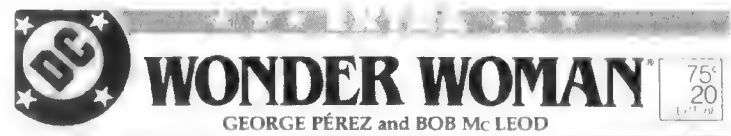
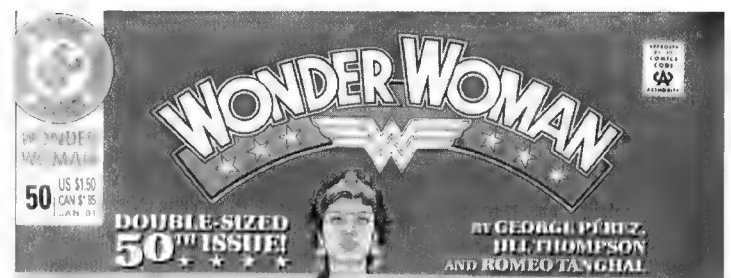
And that's one thing I admired about Karen Berger as an editor. At that point I easily could have bullied my way by saying, "No, no. I want to write, or I *walk*." But she does exactly what [a good] editor does—she does what's *best* for the *book*. And she wasn't intimidated by the fact that I was George Perez, she just said, "I want the best George Perez I can get. And I don't think you writing it right now, untested, is the best thing this book can have." So I begrudgingly, but admiringly, acquiesced to that, and then did a critical job on the dialoguing. There's some stuff I think was great, some stuff I disagreed with. And when I did, finally, get my first issue, at least Karen knew that my storytelling skills were well honed. I could have been flying the book for over a year by that point [issue 17].

And, when I did my first script, the first ten pages Karen had me totally rewrite because I was too verbose. I was doing the same thing I criticized other writers for doing. But Karen said, "George, no. We need to have this done *right*." So she had me re-do it. It got me upset, but she did it, *thankfully*. And, after those first ten pages, the second ten pages were better. And I would learn more about it as I went along. And *Wonder Woman* became *solely* mine at that point, up until I left the art after issue 24. And it was another step in my development.

And I guess another reason why I chose *Wonder Woman* as my first scripted thing was Marv, again, got me interested in mythology when we did a two-part mythological story in *Titans* years before. So that kind of laid the foundation for my interest in doing *Wonder Woman* in the same manner.

CBM: What were some of your best moments on the book, and what about them really makes them stand out in your mind?

Perez: I think the resolution of the first story arc with Ares, wherein *Wonder Woman* who was *most definitely* outclassed physically by the god, Ares, had to use *truth* to win her battle—without making it seem that she's a wimp. She's a strong woman, she's already proven herself. It's just that she can't beat this guy physically.



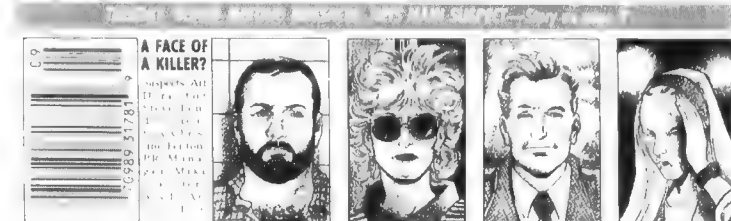
WHO KILLED MYNDI MAYER?

MURDERED 'STAR PUBLICIST' HAD MANY ENEMIES

BOSTON—Police investigating the brutal death of controversial publicist Myndi Mayer have found no shortage of suspects among her clientele and acquaintances, according to Detectives Ed Indelicato and (Continued on Page 2)



Princess Diana, left, in 'Wonder Woman' comic, next to a photo of Mayer. Mayer was the publicist for the actress who was killed. (Continued on Page 2)



The personal stuff, I enjoyed the experiment of issue eight, "Time Passages," where it was an illustrated text. Because regular storytelling only serves a purpose to some degree. The text was divorced from the body of the artwork. So it was a nice, interesting experiment. And "The Challenge of the Gods" was a high point because that was the reason I went on the book. Of course, with the added thing of trying to explain how Diana was named Diana since they are a Greek pantheon, and there's a Roman god named Diana. And the Steve Trevor relationship was [given] a different slant; I really enjoyed doing that.

And then, beyond that, the first issue of "Traces." Issue 17 is the first issue I actually scripted [by myself]. Diana going to Greece, the idea of her standing, physically, on the land where centuries ago her sisters stood. I think I just enjoyed handling her in that issue a lot, and the fact that I was helped by a friend who actually did come from Cephalonia in Greece, and he helped give that particular issue a verisimilitude that it would have lacked otherwise.

And to me, strangely, the *crowning* achievement in *Wonder Woman* were the two stories that had to do with Myndi Meyer when she was killed, "Who is Myndi Meyer." Again, a character issue, putting Wonder Woman in, of all things, a detective mystery. I *really* loved doing her that way. I think I nailed the character of Myndi Meyer, who was a better character *dead* than she was alive. And her funeral in the annual, wherein I got to do some Alan Moore-type of storytelling; where if you read the text dialogue straight through, it's linear, but if you look at the artwork I keep switching time and locale during the course of the five-page story, that was a great achievement.

I think my favorite issue of *Wonder Woman*, ironically, is the annual. Because I got to work with so many great people, *and* it was the first time that I had ever written for anyone else. So I got to work with Art Adams, Jose Garcia Lopez, Brian Bolland, John Bolton, Curt Swan and Ross Andru. I had the time of my life. And, of course, *me*, because I had the five-pager at the end. So that one stands as my *favorite Wonder Woman* story because I got to play with all the superstars. That was an All Star game, there.

CBM: Which brings up an interesting question: When you write for yourself, do you do a full script or just a plot, and when you write for someone else, what kind of script do you give them?

Perez: Well, very simply, I [would] still have to write a fairly full plot because it still had to be approved by an editor. As for the other artists, one advantage I have is that I think *very* visually. And when Art Adams, who was one of the very first artists to receive a plot, read it and said, "I can see all the images on this," then I knew that I had accomplished what I had set out to do. And that I would get such a diverse group of people in there, and get some really, *really* great visuals from all of them, it was like, "OK, all those years *have* helped." Being an artist does help in being able to script something for other artists.

CBM: What were some of the important things that you learned while working as Rich Buckler's assistant?



GEORGE PEREZ

Perez: I learned things about layout and little, subtle things. Like how to make a character more dynamic by having a line—the line of action in the background, if there is background—be a counter to that [figure] so it makes everything stand out. He taught me basic ideas for perspective, and how to make characters a little more solid. At that point Rich was very much in his Jack Kirby stage, where things were very, very exaggerated. Some of the stuff I took. Some of the stuff I kind of fought. And, since Rich was very much in his Jack Kirby phase, and swiping stage, I developed a *big* dislike for swiping. Because I just thought I didn't want to draw like some other artist. I wanted to draw in my own style, whatever that style ended up being. But going through all those Jack Kirby references did tell me a lot about storytelling. I appreciated Jack Kirby's work a lot—I *loved* him growing up—but I think having to go through them in order to find what would work for a specific swipe, I really started to understand a little more of the thinking behind storytelling. So I think that's what I came out [learning]; not as much of an artistic influence, as opposed to understanding the medium, is what I learned from looking at Rich Buckler.

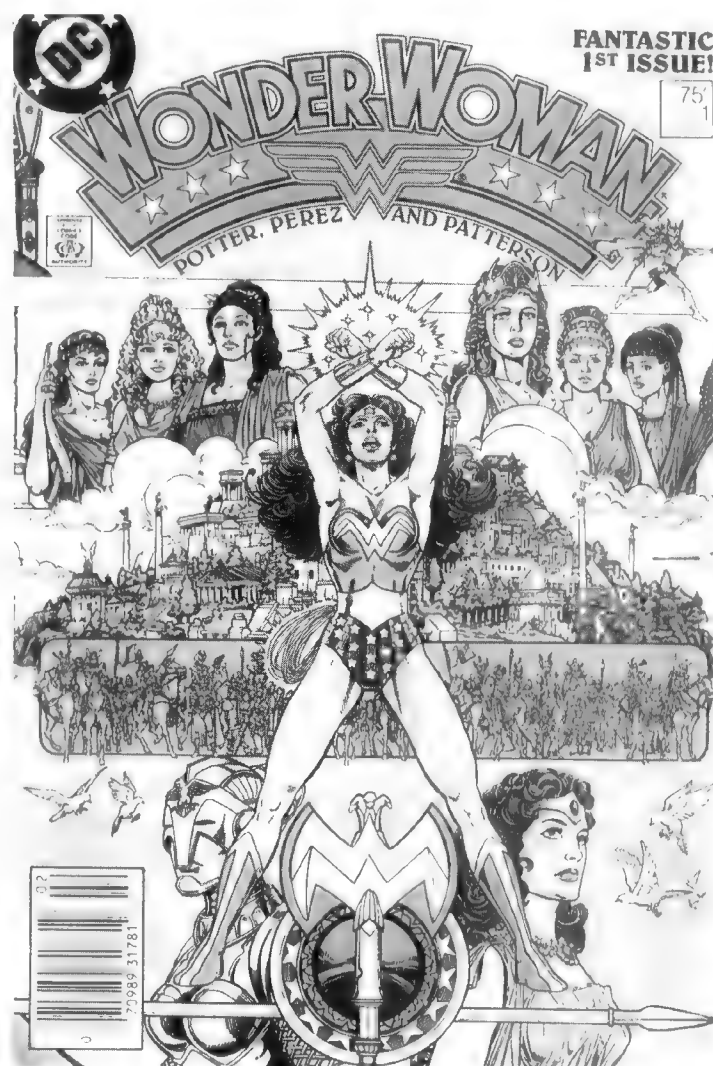
What I *did* learn from that [time] was the *dynamics*, which a lot of people confuse [with style]. When they show you Jack Kirby's work, or John Buscema's work while he was on *The Avengers*, or Gil Kane, who was a dynamic artist, when they show you their work, they're not saying basically they want you to *draw* like them, but to understand and try to bring out the same dynamic quality that makes their work compatible with comic books. And, also, the idea that how to tell a story is first and foremost, the fundamental thing that makes comic book art different from any other art field. And *that's* what I had to understand.

CBM: When you started to get to stretch your legs on your own, you really did begin to explore that idea in your early team books. So, what is it about the team concept that just really appeals to you?

Perez: A lot of it is the fact that I love drawing characters, and it's the one way of being able to draw characters from different books in one shot. From years of going to movies, and reading, one of the things I really like is interaction. I like the way characters inter-relate. Sometimes a character is defined not by how *he* behaves, but how some person reacts *to* him, or her. A team book allows me that [luxury]. It also prevents boredom. I love Captain America, but I loved Iron Man. I love The Vision, I love The Scarlet Witch, I love The Thing. And to have to choose which one I would draw on a regular basis was something—thankfully!—that a team book makes moot, 'cause I get to draw all of 'em! [General laughter]

CBM: What kind of scripts were you getting during this time?

Perez: At that point every writer was giving me a page-by-page breakdown of the story. Seldom, if ever, did I get a full script. Most of the time, it was [a plot outline wherein] each page was described. After first issues of most of the books, the writers tended to be a little less detailed. They would explain motivation and background, but as far as all those little bits of action, they started to leave it up to me because



they trusted that I knew how to handle that. And at that point, since I was still reading comics religiously, I understood the characters as well. So I would never have Captain America giving anyone the finger, or something similar, making him unlike Captain America. So they trusted me on that.

One of my great joys is that on *The Avengers*, on *The Fantastic Four*, on most of the books that I've done, I've usually won over the writer because, even when there were weaknesses in my artwork, I served the story. I tried everything I could to make the story dynamic [and to] realize, within the limitations of my ability, the vision of the writer.

CBM: Do you read through the entire plot or script first, and then start with thumbnails, or do you go right to the boards at that point?

Perez: Oh yeah, I read through it first. I used to [do thumbnails], very, very early [in my career] because Rich Buckler used to do it. I have not done thumbnails in almost two decades. I like drawing right on the board. There are a lot of erasures, but I feel like I just want to get straight on to it.

CBM: About how long does it take you to draw a typical page?

Perez: It varies, depending on the page. When I started out, since I was basically faking everything, I used to be able to do three, three-and-a-half pages a day. Now, I do one comfortably, and it's a fully penciled page. I can do two, but it's just layout pencils. Layout, as defined by me, [means that] basically I don't use as much ruler action. I've found that as I've gotten older, and become more dedicated to making things right, I have slowed down immensely. So one page a day is best for getting the best Perez work out.

CBM: What about covers?

Perez: Covers take about three days, on average, because the thinking that's involved in designing it has a totally different intent. It's not meant to tell a story; it's meant to *impact* the reader. To give them the gist of the story, or just a symbolic representation of an action. The covers take me about a day to design, and then I usually lay it out with blue pencil, then another day to go and tighten it with regular pencil. And I tend to draw, pencil, *very* tight, even if I'm going to be inking it myself, because I prefer correcting mistakes with an eraser rather than whiteout. And there [are times] you are very close to a drawing, and you really don't see a mistake until it's almost too late. By penciling it in detail, and by separating it by at least a day between the penciling and before I start inking, it gives me one last chance to see it with fresh eyes and spot any mistakes before I commit it to ink.

CBM: When it comes to inking, are you comfortable having other people ink your work, or do you prefer it when you get to ink your own work?

Perez: I love to ink my own work, but I'd never make a living if I had to rely on that, considering the amount of time it takes. More

[continued on page 80]





A sparkling example of romance comics at their sleaziest!

This has gotta be one of the greatest (and sleaziest) romance comic book covers of all time! I assume that this cover scene is supposed to illustrate this issue's lead story, "Fast Track For Love," which is signed by the creative team of Leon Winik and Ray Osrin (whether they were a writer/artist or penciler/inker team is unknown.) But strangely enough, "Lola," the lead character of "Fast Track For Love" is a blonde, while our cover girl is a blonde/brunette/redhead (depending on what portion of her hairdo you're looking at! Whoever this comic's colorist was, he was apparently obviously covering all his bases with this cheesy tri-color hair treatment!) Other stories in this comic include "A Savage In Love" (also by Winik and Osrin) and "None But The Lonely" (which is unsigned).

Here's a bit of "Lola's" telling narration from the lead story:

"To marry a poor man and be a household drudge wasn't in my books. I preferred a swell time and a man with money could give it to me. My job at the track as hatcheck girl in the clubhouse café brought men around." Lola meets a high-rolling racetrack horse-owner named Frank Henley, who immediately sweeps her off her feet. After a few weeks of the best clubs, a private box at the track and yacht parties, Frank leaves town on business and doesn't return Lola's calls. Her friend introduces her to Bob, a redheaded-and-freckled factory worker (who's the spittin' image of Jimmy Olsen, bow tie and all!) to take her mind off of Frank. Lola finds herself falling for Bob, but when she receives a phone call from Frank, she throws herself back into his arms, until Frank's outraged wife, Edith, discovers them! It turns out that Frank's not only been cheating on his wife with Lola, but also with many other women! However, Bob conveniently re-appears and offers his handkerchief and marriage to the sobbing Lola! Isn't life simple—at least in romance comics!



ODDBALL Factoid—This issue of *True Life Secrets* also features a one-page comic book adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's poem "Romance"!



True Life Secrets
Volume 1 Number 23 (Nov/Dec 1954)
Publisher: Charlton Comics Group
Cover Artist: Unknown

funnies fairago

By R.C. Harvey



Some Further Adieu

he calls her “Princess,” and that, it turns out, is the consummate expression, for him, of their relationship. She calls him “Willie love,” but that, for American readers, is misleading: they aren’t lovers. For readers in their native Britain, however, “love” here represents not fevered ardor but a kind of familial affection, and that is an almost complete description, to her, of their relationship.

To me, Modesty Blaise and Willie Garvin are a literary pair to rank with Damon and Phintias*. Or Roland and Oliver. Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson. Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. But Modesty and Willie are a greater literary achievement than these more celebrated duos: they are more fully rounded, more human. Their personalities have depth and nuance. They live. For a pot-boiler pair, that’s a notable feat.

*sometimes incorrectly spelled “Pythias”

Peter O’Donnell concocted Modesty and Willie as characters in a comic strip of stylish cloak and dagger intrigue for a London newspaper. The strip followed the clandestine adventures of the voluptuous and superbly athletic Modesty, a retired and fabulously wealthy erstwhile leader of an international crime network who now devoted her considerable talents for lethal undercover work to helping the British secret service, which she did with the able assistance of her comrade in arms, Willie Garvin.

Modesty and Willie were also incarnated in 13 novels and two collections of short stories where their personalities were more fully fleshed out than in the strip. Last spring, in early April, the comic strip ended after almost 38 years, 10,183 individual daily strips. And O’Donnell had said, with the publication of the book *The Cobra Trap* in 1996, that he would write no more novels about Modesty Blaise. But that is scarcely the end of Modesty and Willie.

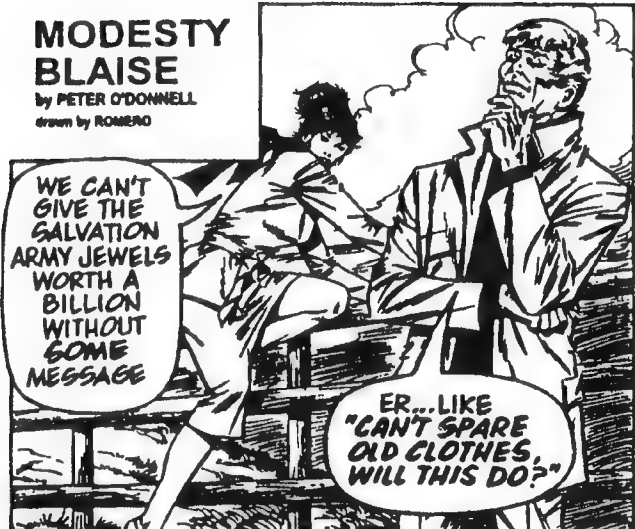
Like any other literary creations, they will live on in the works that gave them life. The novels are still on shelves in bookstores, waiting to be purchased and read. And *Comics Revue* started re-running the strip in December with issue No. 188. (Subscriptions are \$45 for 12 monthly issues from Manuscript Press, PO Box 336, Mountain Home, TN 37684.)

The appeal of *Modesty Blaise* lies in the ingenuity of O’Donnell’s plots—their inventiveness, their twists, the ten-terhooks upon which O’Donnell suspends his readers—the intelligence of his stories and their devices, the novelty of his characterizations, and the transcendence of the partnership between Modesty and Willie. Theirs is a romance without romance.

When Modesty first saw Willie Garvin, she was head of the Network, that international criminal organization I mentioned. And Willie was a gutter-bred bitter self-hating rough-neck hoodlum. But Modesty saw in him not only prodigious physical abilities, but impressive mental prowess and, presumably, a kind of innate stalwartness. She rescued him from his thug’s lowlife and gave him the opportunity to make something of himself. And in six months, a new Willie Garvin emerged—a man of cheerful confidence and sharp intelligence with all his former



John Burns’ rendition of the duo in their usual battle garb.



The last comic strip, published April 11, 2001, with art by Romero.

criminal skills enhanced by his knowledge that someone believed in him—Modesty. On the day they met, when Modesty bought him out of jail, she seemed a “Princess” to Willie; and he has called her “Princess” ever since.

Through the six years they worked together in the Network, “they schemed, fought, bled, tended each other’s hurts,” and, in effect, became halves of a single personality, so attuned that each knew what the other was thinking and would do under any circumstance. And then, having piled up a small fortune apiece, they retired. Modesty split up the Network among her lieutenants and bought a penthouse in London; Willie took possession of an old-world pub by the River Thames.

But they were not content with their new humdrum existence, and so when Sir Gerald Tarrant of British Intelligence needed some unorthodox help in an enterprise that was, for him, illegal, he turned to Modesty and Willie. They helped Tarrant on that occasion and liked the work well enough to take other assignments as they cropped up. And those comprise the Modesty Blaise oeuvre of Peter O’Donnell.

Until Modesty came along, most of O’Donnell’s writing was in comics. In his pre-war youth, he wrote “picture stories” for juvenile magazines; after his service in World War II, he eventually made his way into newspapers, writing *Garth* and *Tug Transom* adventure strips and a couple of humorous strips as well as short stories for women’s magazines.

Then at the end of 1956, the *Daily Mirror* lost the artist-writer of one of its most popular strips, *Romeo Brown*, and O’Donnell was invited to write it. To draw it, the *Mirror* hired the man O’Donnell would thereafter always refer to as “the great Jim Holdaway,” the artist who would, later, give Modesty Blaise her glamorous appearance.

Romeo Brown was a blundering comical detective out of P.G. Wodehouse, but the strip’s “main idea,” O’Donnell

said, “was to get girls’ clothes off in the nicest possible way.”

Later, O’Donnell learned that Holdaway was plunged into despair when he found out what *Romeo Brown* was about. “He went home and said to his wife, ‘I can’t do this—I can’t draw girls.’ He had been drawing westerns for a long time and thought that he could draw only cowboys and horses!”

It soon developed, however, that Holdaway could draw pretty girls very well. Sexy, beautiful girls. Well enough that when O’Donnell invented Modesty Blaise—a beautiful, sexy heroine—he wanted Holdaway to draw her, to give her visual life.

Modesty Blaise began in the *London Evening Standard* on May 13, 1963, but O’Donnell’s heroine had been lurking in the back corridors of his imagination for many months prior to that. After a decade of producing stories for he-men like Garth and Tug Transom while also writing romantic fiction for female readers, O’Donnell had started thinking about combining the two somehow in “a super woman who could have the kind of adventure the big, super male heroes had been having all this time—that was the beginning.”

Said O’Donnell: “You let these things simmer. You don’t consciously think about them very often. But gradually the



This is a romance without romance.

yeast seems to work, and a character emerges. I would say that until you actually start to write the characters—to put dialogue in the mouth and to activate the strings of the [puppet]—they don’t come to life. I can only get so far in thinking

about a character, and then I've got to start working them out—writing pages and pages of dialogue and action just to get the blood flowing through the veins—and then they'll begin to take on life for themselves and sometimes surprise me with what they say or do."

In imagining such a "super woman" as Modesty, O'Donnell had to give her a background, a history that would make her plausible. "I don't think you could take a girl from behind a counter in a shop and turn her into a Modesty Blaise. It had to be born in the blood and the bone."

He remembered, then, an incident from his army career. As he has told it frequently (try <http://www.cs.umu.se/~kenth/Modesty/podint.html>), while sitting on the banks of a stream in Persia in 1942 having lunch out of his mess kit, he saw a refugee girl in her early teens—a ragged, solitary kid but self-possessed, assured. With her image in his mind as a start, he formulated the rest of Modesty's fictitious past—her wandering for years the post-war Middle East with an aged professor who educated her, her subsequent apprenticeship in a Tangier casino where she acquired social polish and knowledge of the underworld sufficient to take over the operation when her boss died, a take-over that resulted eventually in the Network.

"Once Modesty had fully emerged," O'Donnell said, "the totality of Willie Garvin followed thirty seconds later. He is an essential part of her."

The novels began with the 1966 *Modesty Blaise* movie. Initially, the idea was to promote the movie, and O'Donnell simply adapted the screenplay he'd written. But the final screenplay was re-written several times, leaving only one line from O'Donnell's script; so the first novel, *Modesty Blaise* (1965), is no longer anything like the film. (And a good thing, too: the movie was so bad, O'Donnell said, that he got a nosebleed.)

O'Donnell found more satisfaction in writing the novels. In writing the strip, he produced crudely drawn thumbnails of the panels so he would know how much space the words



A panel from the 12-strip sequence that traces Modesty's history and served new client papers as an introduction to the strip.



Despite his reservations, Holdaway proved adept at rendering sexy women, including Modesty in action.

were taking—and, conversely, that sufficient room remained for the artwork. But the novels were solo performances with the writer in complete control. Moreover, in a novel "there's elbow room to give more nuances of feeling and to say what's going on inside your characters."

The novels also more fully explain the relationship between Modesty and Willie, supplying an answer to the question O'Donnell has been plagued with more than any other.

From *Sabre-tooth*: "Modesty...by some strange magic had stripped away the veneer and liberated Willie Garvin from the gnawing demons who rode on his back. For this liberation, the new Willie Garvin had made himself—not her slave, for she would not allow that, but her eternally faithful follower. And though she had raised him up to become her right arm, he still sat at her feet. And there was no loss of masculinity in this...Willie Garvin was wholly

FUNNIES FARRAGO

convinced that sitting at Modesty's feet set him head and shoulders above any man alive—even those few who had known the gifts of her splendid body." To suggest, as some did, that there was something sexual between them embarrassed Willie "as a devout believer might be embarrassed by a friend's unwitting sacrilege."

By 1973, *Modesty Blaise* was published in 76 newspapers in 35 countries. The strip appeared in the U.S. in 30-40 papers at the time the movie ran. All but the *Detroit Free Press* soon dropped it, saying the stories ran too long, 16-17 weeks. U.S. papers wanted O'Donnell to cut back to 12 weeks, but he refused. To do so, he said, would cut the meat out. "You'll end up with no depth of character, no humor, none of the fleshing out and asides that, to my mind, are vital parts of the success of the Modesty Blaise/Willie Garvin setup."

O'Donnell and Holdaway met once a week when the artist delivered the week's worth of strips to the writer at his Fleet Street office. O'Donnell would look over the strips, and if "amendments" were needed, Holdaway would make them. And then they would deliver the completed batch across the street to the *Standard* offices.

Writing later of these encounters, O'Donnell said he never knew quite what to expect on the day Holdaway was to appear. "Sometimes the door would open an inch, and a voice would order me to throw out my gun and come out with my hands up. Sometimes he was the gas-meter man with a falsetto voice. Sometimes his hat would be thrown in, and sometimes the first I knew of his arrival was when clouds of cigarette smoke would come wafting through my old-fashioned office letter-box."

They worked well together, O'Donnell believed. "We enjoyed and respected each other's contribution and worked together in the greatest harmony."



MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL



One of O'Donnell's most effective conceits was that, after performing superhuman feats of harrowing action, Modesty collapsed emotionally, and Willie was there to see her through each episode.

Then in 1970, in the midst of their 18th Modesty story together, the great Jim Holdaway died. Struck down by a wholly unexpected heart attack at the youthful age of 43. Fifteen years after Holdaway's death, O'Donnell would write: "Jim

Holdaway was a small man with a gentle manner, an immense talent, and a lovely sense of humor. I still miss him."

The *Standard* editors held try-outs for a replacement, and they and O'Donnell finally settled on a Spaniard, Enrique Badia-Romero. Thereafter, the production of the strip was conducted mostly by mail, which made a detour at the *Standard* offices for O'Donnell's scripts to be translated into Spanish.

Romero left Modesty in 1978 to concentrate on his own strip, *Axa*. He returned in the fall of 1986 and continued to draw the strip for the rest of its run. During his sabbatical, *Modesty* was drawn briefly by John Burns, then Pat Wright, and, finally, Neville Colvin from late 1980 until Romero's return, a total of 15 stories. Colvin's work seemed to O'Donnell to be closer to Holdaway's than any of the other successors; and I agree although he was closer at the beginning than at the end of his tour.

All 95 of the Modesty Blaise stories (and the 12 back-story strips about Modesty's refugee life) have been reprinted in one place or another. Titan Books in England published 23 stories in eight 9"x11" paperbacks which present

MODESTY BLAISE

the highest quality reprints, nearly pristine reproduction of every line no matter how fragile. Ken Pierce of Illinois published another 21 stories (only three of which duplicate Titan's) in eight 7"x10" paperbacks. The quality here, too, is virtually perfect but the strips are smaller than in the Titan volumes. All of Holdaway's work can be found in either Titan or Pierce. The rest of the canon has been published by *Comics Revue*, sometimes in special Modesty Blaise issues that contain whole stories, sometimes serialized in the regular monthly magazine. The quality of reproduction here, however, is very uneven—due, doubtless, to the magazine's source material, which, apparently, is not always printer's proofs.

Modesty Blaise was one of the last great adventure strips, and it is arguably the most literate adventure strip ever. And the novels are better than the strip. The books have an advantage over newspapers' serial mode: their emotional content is cumulative, not diffused over intervening days, and therefore builds toward greater impact.

In the last of the books, the short story collection *The Cobra Trap*, O'Donnell arranged the retirement of his dauntless pair. They die. They die gracefully, in battle, as befits such legendary soldiers of fortune. O'Donnell brings down the curtain with his usual finesse, easing Willie into the afterlife on the last page of the title story.

This tale takes place 20 years "in the future," so Modesty and Willie are in their fifties. In last spring's final strip story, "The Zombie," they are still in their thirties and have twenty more years of exploits before them.

At the end of the last strip adventure, Modesty announces that she is tired of villains and secret service work and

wants to do something "crazy—just for fun. We'll take a little break, Willie love," she says, "just you and me." Says he: "Best bit of all, Princess." And they sail off in a yacht.

The strip ended April 11. It was O'Donnell's 82nd birthday.

Next time, if the Palooka doesn't give up ham in favor of fish thereby capping po'k-chops with a dogpatch, we'll report on what Bill Watterson has been doing since leaving his calvinist hobby. ☹



COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

ADVERTISING RATES

FULL PAGE AD
(7 1/8" WIDE X 9 5/8" TALL)
\$400.00

HALF PAGE HORIZONTAL
(7 1/8" WIDE X 4 5/8" TALL)
\$300.00

THIRD PAGE VERTICAL
(2 1/4" WIDE X 9 1/4" TALL)
\$235.00

QUARTER PAGE
(4 5/8" WIDE X 3 3/4" TALL)
\$190.00

BIG/LITTLE AD
(BUSINESS CARD 3 1/2" WIDE X 2" TALL)
\$100.00

Above rates are for black & white camera-ready ads. Include payment with ad copy and forward to the address below. The ad deadline is the 10th. Rate Card and further information available upon request.

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE
PO BOX 469
WEST PLAINS, MO 65775

CONTACT CBM ADVERTISING
888-375-9800 x413
FAX 410-560-7143

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

12 issues for \$60

Mail check or MO payable to:

GEMSTONE PUBLISHING

PO BOX 469

WEST PLAINS, MO 65775

MasterCard/VISA/Discover orders call:
800 322 7978

MO residents add 6.475% state tax
MD residents add 5% state tax

Foreign subscriptions: Canada/Mexico \$62, Great Britain/France/Norway/Germany/Western Europe \$110, Japan/Singapore/Philippines/Australia/Asian Pacific Rim \$120 (all US funds)

THE Greatest COMIC BOOK EVER

well...for this month at least

by Mark Squirek

In the early sixties, my father worked a mid-shift for the Penn Central Railroad system. Because the mid-shift was not as busy as a day shift, there was time to be had between the noise and motion of the trains. To pass the time, some men would play cards, others would stretch out and take a nap. One or two would sneak a beer.

My father would read.

He never left the house without a book in his back pocket. Nine times out of ten, the book was either Bullfinch's or Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*. Being a natural but reluctant storyteller, he would later rework these myths for his children. I ate these stories up.

When I couldn't understand how the Greek and Roman stories could

overlap yet be different, he took me over to a small globe that he kept near his desk and explained how the two countries were not only separated by distance, but also by time. The Greeks were there first and the Romans came along later. He continued by telling me the Romans took the Greek myths and adapted some of them to their own needs.

This is around the beginning of 1964, so when I found the Justice Society that summer in the pages of *Justice League* #29, I had no problem with the concept of Earth-2. After all, the Justice Society was just the Justice League, but from an earlier time; separated only by the distance of a "vibrational plane."

The appearance of so many new heroes in the JSA only whetted my appetite for more. I showed the two issues to my Dad. He remembered a few of the heroes, Hawkman, Dr. Midnite, but he couldn't fill in the holes. Suddenly, the Greeks and Romans weren't that exciting, I needed to know about these "new" heroes from World War II.

The rest of the year I spent looking through every issue of DC comics that I could find for more information about the Golden Age legends. It wasn't until around the spring/summer of 1965 that my prayers for more JSA were answered.

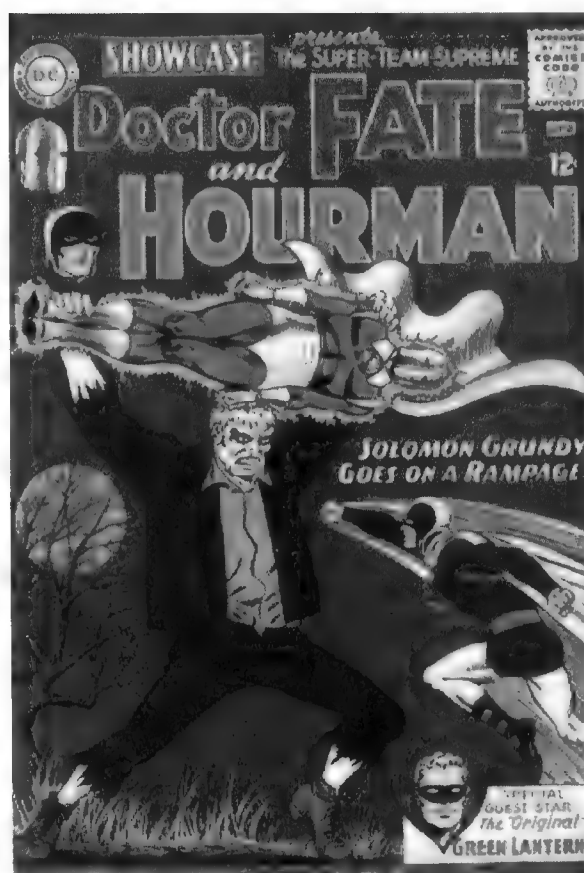
I don't recall if I first saw the cover to *Showcase* #55 in a house ad for DC, or if it was just sitting there, on a spinner rack, waiting for me to walk into Marshall Drugs at the brand new Westgate Mall. I do know this, I can remember thinking that I must be insane, because nothing in life could actually be this good.

The cover is one of the greatest of Murphy Anderson's career. In a dark, purple night, Dr. Fate, powerless and frozen, in an obvious state of extreme frustration (look at

how tightly his fists are clenched by his side), is being held horizontally above the head of a pale, enraged monster twice his size. He is protected only by a green aura of magic. The monster is focused on one thing and one thing only, the brave figure of a man leaping towards him, hoping to free Dr. Fate with a single blow. Behind this action, there is a large, orange, full moon partially blocked by a bare tree.

That single detail of the full moon placed the battle in reality. It looked just like the moon when it hung low over the woods at the dead end of our street, Charles Road. This monster could easily be living less than a mile away! All the action is summed up simply in the title: "Solomon Grundy Goes On A Rampage!"

The opening splash page gives a quick introduction to the heroes, but it



THE GREATEST COMIC EVER!

takes the whole second page (a special prologue to the story), to meet Solomon Grundy. We find that Grundy is "...not real life, only a weird distortion of it." He has been created "...by the strange chemical reaction of sizzling sunlight beating down on the decayed vegetation of soggy swamp-land."

God bless Gardner Fox's penchant for alliteration.

As much as I enjoy Gardner Fox's writing, it has always been Murphy's art that made these issues enjoyable to me. Somehow, his style seems to have one foot in the Golden Age feel of the writing, and another foot in the modern, updated style of 1965, effortlessly bridging both eras. Looking again at the splash page, I remember being really impressed by the tremendous size of Solomon compared to the two heroes. The artist makes you feel the heavy bulk of Grundy's being.

One thing that always drove me up a wall as a kid was when the cover didn't match what was going on inside. Here the battle on the cover is not only acknowledged, but taken a step further. The scene is directly addressed inside during the fight sequence that ends Chapter 1. Murphy expertly gives us separate, yet different views of the tumultuous fight that the cover promised. It is almost like a DVD that allows you to see different angles of the same action.

It has been common knowledge for many years that DC would develop a cover before moving ahead with a story. I

wonder if Mr. Anderson created the cover or if he was inspired by Gardner Fox's outline.

When I had to justify my love of comics to my father, and that was often, I would point to this story and show him how comics were opening my mind to other myths and fables of the world. He had no real defense. Score one for Gardner Fox. (Comics also helped me when, in fifth grade science, Sister Lelia asked if anyone knew what "ferro" was. I thanked God that day for the Legion of Super-Heroes!)



In business since 1974
Redbeard's Book Den

- Our incredible selection is updated daily
 - Searchable database with shopping cart
 - Secure credit card service and PayPal
 - Managed by Ron Pussell, senior Price Guide consultant since 1980
 - Always buying!
- (775) 831-4848**

Your collectibles are priceless treasures that can't be replaced. Treat them that way.

As the long-standing leader in high-quality archival supplies, we at E. Gerber Products offer serious protection for the serious collector by creating the finest preservation and storage supply products on the market – affordable archival supplies that enable you to keep your collectibles pristine and resistant to the ravages of time.

We stock a full line of products to protect your collection. Our Archives and Mylites 2 bags are the finest in the industry, built to last and designed from concept to manufacturing with one goal in mind: preserve your collectibles from the ravages of time and the environment.

ARCHIVES		Formerly "Snugs™"			
		• Made from 4 mil thick Mylar D® • Dimensions are width x height plus two 7/8" flaps.			
Price per Item#	Size	Description	50	200	1000
550R	5 x 5 1/2	Compact Disc	\$12.50	\$42.00	\$180.00
625R	6 1/4 x 8 5/8	Reader's Digest & Paperbacks	\$19.00	\$62.00	\$270.00
700R	7 x 10 1/2	Current Comics - 1990's	\$19.25	\$63.00	\$276.00
725R	7 1/4 x 10 1/2	Standard Comics - 1970's-90's	\$19.50	\$64.00	\$282.00
775R	7 3/4 x 10 1/2	Silver/Golden Comics - 1950's-70's	\$20.00	\$66.00	\$288.00
800R	8 X 11	Golden Age Comics - 1940's-50's	\$21.25	\$70.00	\$306.00
825R	8 1/4 x 11	Super Golden Age Comics	\$22.25	\$73.00	\$318.00
875R	8 3/4 x 11	Large Comics, Mag. & Letter	\$24.25	\$78.00	\$348.00
900R	9 x 12	Standard Magazines	\$29.50	\$97.00	\$420.00
914R	9 x 14 1/2	Legal Size	\$35.50	\$116.00	\$504.00
950R	9 1/2 x 12 1/4	Sheet Music, Large Magazines	\$31.25	\$106.00	\$468.00
Add Shipping & Handling*			\$2.00	\$7.00	\$22.00

Mylites 2		• Made from 2 mil thick Mylar D® • Dimensions are width x height plus flap. • Flap can be folded over, tucked in, or taped closed. • The 2 mil sleeves are twice the thickness and 4 times the protection of 1 mil thick bags.			
Price per Item#	Size	Description	50	200	1000
525M2	5 1/4 x 7 1/4	Photograph, Negatives	\$9.50	\$31.00	\$130.00
625M2	6 1/4 x 10 1/2	Reader's Digest & Paperbacks	\$10.50	\$35.00	\$150.00
700M2	7 x 10 3/4	Current Comics - 1990's	\$10.75	\$36.00	\$155.00
725M2	7 1/4 x 10 3/4	Standard Comics - 1970's-90's	\$11.00	\$37.00	\$160.00
775M2	7 3/4 x 10 3/4	Silver/Gold Comics - 1950's-70's	\$11.50	\$38.00	\$165.00
800M2	8 x 10 3/4	Golden Age Comics - 1940's-50's	\$12.00	\$39.00	\$175.00
825M2	8 1/4 x 10 3/4	Super Golden Age Comics	\$12.50	\$42.00	\$180.00
875M2	8 3/4 x 10 3/4	Large Comics, Mag. & Letter	\$12.75	\$43.00	\$185.00
900M2	9 x 12	Standard Magazines	\$16.25	\$53.00	\$225.00
Add Shipping & Handling*			\$1.00	\$4.00	\$11.00

For a complete list of our affordable archival products, please call us toll-free at

1-800-79-MYLAR

from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, or mail your request to:

E. Gerber Products, LLC
1720 Belmont Avenue, Suite C
Baltimore, MD 21244
Fax: 1-410-944-9363
e-mail: archival@egerber.com

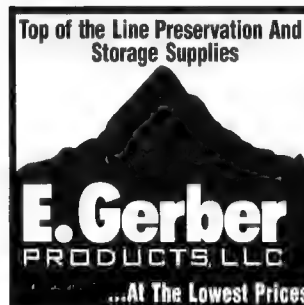
The Best Protection at the Best Price

Satisfaction Guaranteed

All E. Gerber archival supply products carry our assurance of the highest quality standards in both material and manufacturing.

Visit us on the Web at www.egerber.com!

© 2001 Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc. E. Gerber Products, Inc. is a registered trademark of Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc. All rights reserved.



NEW & NOTEWORTHY

By J.C. Vaughn, Executive Editor

Bruce Jones Returns with a (Hulk) Smash!

Whether readers know the work of Bruce Jones from classic Warren horror or Ka-Zar from Marvel or Alien Worlds and Twisted Tales from Pacific Comics in the early days of the Direct Market, they know he's a writer who crafts solid, thought-provoking entertainment. He recently reemerged at the helm of The Incredible Hulk and as the writer of a three-issue arc for Spider-Man: Tangled Web.

CBM: You've worked in comics on and off. What did you do after you left comics after your last stint?

Bruce Jones: It's a little confusing because I guess there have been several stints. In a sense I never completely left comics, but there was a period in the late '80s and '90s when I did less work for them. I got involved in film and TV in the mid '80s and then writing novels regularly at decade's end. My inner mind was being stretched to its outer limits, so I cut back on comics, which I felt had gotten into a bit of a rut. Like every freelancer not under specific contract, my schedule was always a juggling act between genres and bill paying. Also, a new echelon of comic book editors came to the fore and, let's face it, some people just forgot me.

CBM: What attracted you back to the medium at this point?

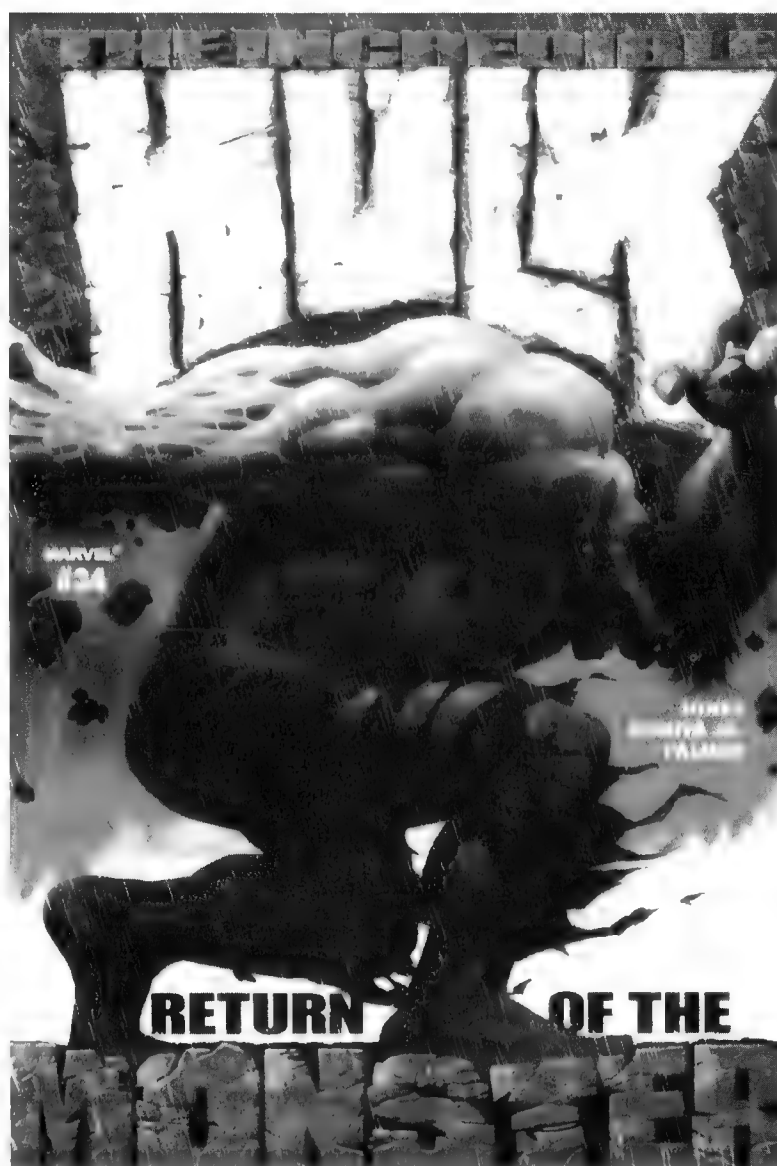
Jones: I never needed much encouragement to work in comics because I always loved the medium. And it began to get exciting again. Strange as this may sound, comics—for

me at least—are less creatively restrictive than a lot of art forms. Novels are really very genre-driven, unless you try something esoteric, which is very hard to sell to both publisher and public. Movies have the platform for tremendous latitude but, as most people know, film is the most collaborative of all mediums (read: diluted) even if you attempt a so-called independent feature. You gain a degree of control making your own movie, but spend all your time running around addressing financing problems and finessing people, which the studios usually shield you from. That's the trade-off. It goes with the turf and can even be exhilarating, but it's a give and take based on man-hours and the extent of your stamina. I'm probably most comfortable behind a typewriter or computer screen, though I'm gregarious by nature and enjoy the think-tank process sometimes. I'd enjoy directing a film. In so many ways that's what a comic writer is doing anyway.

CBM: Your tenure on *Incredible Hulk* comes after a long run by Peter David and several short-lived (and maybe even ill-fated) runs by other creators. How long, at this

point, would you like to stay on the title?

Jones: As long as I'm wanted! It's been a very rewarding, stimulating adventure working with Axel Alonso and John Romita, Jr. and the inkers and colorists and the wonderful Karre Andrews—so many gifted, distinctly creative people. The media keeps interviewing John and me but this is a collaborative medium, if less so than film, and my fear is a lot of unsung heroes go unheralded. My God, even the *printing* is better than when I first began. People complain about the



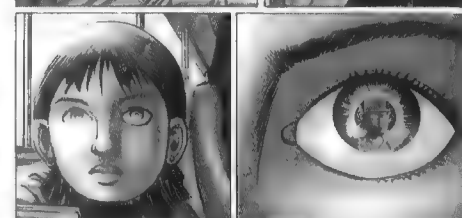
state of comics—to me, they never looked better.

CBM: What do you like about the characters of Bruce Banner and the Hulk?

Jones: A key motivator for me is this kind of Freudian duality in their relationship. In the past I think a lot of people tended to view them as these separate entities—despite the inevitable morphing sequences—simply by virtue of their poles-apart physical and mental discrepancies. What we'll attempt to show is that, at least on a cerebral level, the differences may not be as vast as previously assumed. Each is trapped by the other, true, but as time has gone by, I'm increasingly fascinated with the ways—conscious or not—Banner has come to depend on Hulk as much as despise him. Also the fact that, simply because he seems to have trouble articulating his inner demons, Hulk is not entirely the Neolithic, atavistic brute he's become infamous for. There has to be an interesting mind at work there, if for no other reason than it's inextricable link to Banner's. He is, after all, an organic outgrowth of Banner, not something Bruce can merely summon via a lightning bolt.

CBM: What type of direction will you take with the series?

Jones: Ours is a journey of darkness and discovery, an ongoing sojourn in which both protagonists learn and grow from their interactions with elements and characters encountered—and, more precisely, the effects these encounters have on both parties. One of Banner's problems—in our scenario—is actually his essential goodness. In normal circumstances this would be admirable; he might simply turn himself in. I mean, why is he running at all if he believes in our judicial system? On a deeper, metaphorical level, of course, he's running from himself—but he's also being plagued with these shadowy background entities manifesting themselves in the Silhouette Men and other ambiguous forces—he's entered this realm of tight-



ening isolation and paranoia in which he feels he can trust virtually no one. Enough of that kind of thing can have serious repercussions on your psyche and decision-making process. So even though the last thing the old Banner would want is a force like the Hulk falling into the wrong hands, in his current state he's wrestling with both his fear of and his protective need for this other self—and, by extension, his need to understand and control it. The sooner the better. Which is why his reasons for embracing meditation may have more complex implications than some might perceive.

CBM: What don't you like that's been done with the character previously?

Jones: I think there's been some fine work done on the character in the past, all the way back to the nostalgic Stan Lee days. It's less a matter of what's been done than what maybe hasn't been touched on yet that perhaps we can bring to the table. Every writer comes to each new project with his own vocabulary, his own particular slant on the world. The Hulk isn't mine; he doesn't belong to me but to all of us. I'm just trying to impart what is hopefully the best of whatever talent I may have into the run while attached to it. Others have come before, others will follow. That's why we're trying so hard to respect the character's past glories without being slaves to continuity. And readers now are very accepting of that, I think. For instance, Brian Azzarello's take on the Doc Sampson character in his wonderful *Banner* with Rich Corben was nearly the opposite of my version of the Sampson persona. I even worried about this. But Axel told me, "Don't let your creative juices be stifled by what's gone before—break out!" I'm not trying to pen the definitive Hulk, merely my version. "Definitive" lies within the mind of the individual reader. Everyone has his own favorite story arc or character or writer. For me this is not a contest, it's a challenge. And a privilege.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

CBM: In your “Nuff Said” silent issue, you found a way to have a few pretty clever ways around the silence. How was your approach different to telling that story as opposed to the issue before or the issue after?

Jones: The silent issue was a delight for me because I had been trying to do a pictures-only tale in comics for decades without much enthusiasm from editors. I was more than ready for the opportunity. But in the end, it was John who carried it off. The guy is just such an ace storyteller. He could make the phone book interesting. Add Tom Palmer and Axel to the equation and how can you lose?

CBM: For many of the creators working on the “Nuff Said” issues, these stories were special but really just one more in their particular series. For you, though, it was only your second issue on the book. Was there consideration given to breaking the new tone you established in your first issue?

Jones: Well, it probably wasn't the *ideal* place in the arc, but our first issue was fairly self contained anyway and the “silence” did lend a kind of ethereal poetry to our theme. As I said, I'd been so anxious to flex my muscles with pure visuals that I wasn't about to argue. I think it was a grand experiment and indicative of the creative climate at Marvel right now. This is a very exciting time to be working in comics. I'm currently doing a series of novels under my byline Bruce Elliot—my first running character—and truth to tell my attention is beginning to slide a bit with the enthusiasm for the comics work. Dammit, comics is just fun! And I enjoy the editorial brainstorming, which some writers, I guess, do not. Working on a novel is a very satisfying but primarily solitary experience—I mean, no one's going to write it for you, you have to get down there and beat out a certain number of pages a day, all the while trying to keep the spine of this great gasping whale of a pro-

ject in your head; there's a price to pay for total freedom, it's called panic. Comics is often *frantic*, but I enjoy the pressures of a regular series. Working for HBO and network

TV was like that. Time and budget are critical, which forces you to be on-the-spot creative.

CBM: What can you do in comics that you can't do in another medium?

Jones: There are the obvious budgetary advantages over film, of course, though that's changing. With the advent of computer film making, the imagination is really becoming the only limitation for filmmakers. I know that's a concern for actors and directors who think movies are becoming special effects eye-candy around which story and craft take a back seat. And TV has caught up to features in terms of production values, the one thing they used to be able to lord over Hollywood—the Rod Serling, Reginald Rose, Paddy Chayefsky type script—is taken for granted now in a series like *Once And Again*. Hollywood still has the luxury of time—

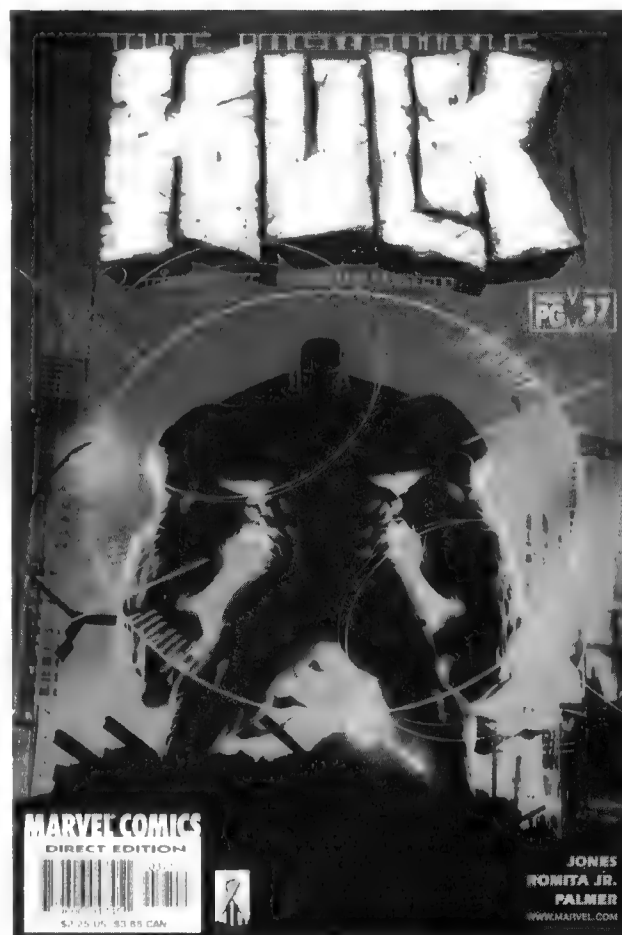


though union costs are eating them alive—and since the computer has become their great champion for cost-cutting effects and unlimited visual feats they employ it extensively, encouraging more and more high concept ideas and less cerebral ones—the same problem that affected the Harryhausen films, wonderful as they were. What you can do in comics is tell stories through words and pictures in a way that is wholly unique in entertainment. At first blush, this seems obvious—but as with every art form it's the way you use it, your willingness to stretch the form and play to its unique strengths, that makes the difference. Comics have developed a complex and sophisticated language denser and more limitless even than novels in my estimation. And there's still a wide vista of unexplored country out there. Future comic writers/artists with talent will mine that soil.

The point, though, is not that one medium is superior to another, but to try to do your best work within the individual but unique limitations of a given form. I get weary of this jaded notion that people don't read anymore. People who read do so as much as they ever did, probably more. I don't let the fact that in sheer numbers there are more basketball fans depress me.

CBM: What are the ups and downs of working on company-owned characters as opposed to your own?

Jones: Up front—assuming we're talking about hits here—money and control. Cottage industries have been built from creator-owned titles. Look at Image and these guys who have their own line of action figures, etc. I think, however, what the average creative person finds when he becomes embroiled in the business side of anything is that there is more necessity for protecting your interests and less and less time for...well, creating. Artists and writers in general, are creator-oriented from childhood. We don't write and draw and make music because we're compelled to make money; we do it because we can't do otherwise. We're neurotic. And proud of it. Which is why it's often easy to take advantage of truly creative people; they usually don't have their mind on the bottom line, but up there in the stratosphere somewhere missing half the conversation at the dinner table. The marriage of art and commerce has always been an uneasy one. That's why something like the current regime at Marvel is such a refreshing change of pace. It reminds me of stories I've heard about the old EC comics, the meeting of minds between the front office and the contributors. Marvel is branching out at an almost breathtaking speed. What they need to embrace is the fact that an occasional failure isn't a bad thing; it's inevitable for real growth. Mistakes are how we learn. The trick is not making them on so vast a scale



you throw out the baby with the bathwater. But believe me, Marvel's way ahead of me on this. Smart bunch of guys.

CBM: Do you still read comics? If so, what titles?

Jones: It's so tough. Because we all tend to read what we've enjoyed before, i.e., authors we know we'll get off on, which is why so many talented young newcomers get the short shrift. And when you're a working writer, that leaves even less time. Yet the writer who writes more than he reads, as they say, is in big trouble. I like Alan Moore, Frank Miller, Brian Azzarello, Louise Simonson. I'm working on a project with Chuck Austin right now who is way better a writer than most people know, a real natural. Mostly I read novels. I love Steve King when he's grounded (*Cujo*), John Sandford, Mitchell Smith, Hank Searls. My biggest influence growing up was Richard Matheson.

CBM: Do you collect anything, including comics?

Jones: I love the space toys and playsets from the Fifties. Just killer style that still holds up. I did a small piece for the new Dark Horse coffee table book *Blast-Off!* Go out and buy it, it's way cool—the book, not my piece. The designs of the Disney and Bonestell rockets were so much cooler than what we eventually ended up with on the moon. George Pal took us in a silvery needle that pierced the soft black nebulae—sleek and gracefully sexual as a Pontiac hood ornament; our astronauts landed in this deranged spider with aluminum legs. It's like the difference between the Dreyfus-

inspired Santa Fe streamliners and Amtrak; one had style, the other looks like a packing crate. I can't figure out why they keep screwing around and don't just go back to the old Super Chief Alco design. If it ain't broke, right? These train people today—what's a parent to do? 

Collectable Character Statues

by Mike Wilbur

The Most Popular Star of DC Direct: Green Lantern

Quick! Which **DC Comics** character has been the subject of the most products from the **DC Direct** collectibles division?

If you're like most people, you probably guessed either **Superman** or **Batman**. They're the two best-known characters in the DC universe, so that's certainly a logical guess.

It's also dead wrong.

The most merchandised character through DC's own in-house collectibles imprint is—**Green Lantern**!

Granted, Green Lantern is a little different from the Big 2, in that many individual characters have worn the costume and wielded the power ring over the last 61 years. But the name of Green Lantern has adorned more DC Direct releases than any other. Three full-size statues, three mini-statues, four mini-busts with prop power rings, a life-size power battery prop (with another pending in early 2002), three rings, five action figures (plus three action figures of GL foes), one pewter figurine, one plush doll and two seven-piece PVC figure sets (with two more in the planning stages).

So far.

Superman and Batman don't even come close; in fact, nobody does. No other DC character has been nearly as visible in DC Direct releases as the Emerald Gladiator.

Since this IS a column about statues, I'll focus on those items.

The first of the Green Lantern statues, released in 1998, was current GL **Kyle Rayner**. He was mounted on a convex base that represented 1/3 of a circular slice of the globe. Silver-Age GL **Hal Jordan**, released in 1999, was mounted on a second 1/3 of the globe. Golden-Age GL **Alan Scott**, released in 2000, was mounted on the final wedge. Miniature versions of these three statues were released in consecutive months through late-2000.

More on the trio of statues later.

In July 2001, Alan Scott, the first of four GL mini-busts, was released. Hal Jordan followed in September 2001. Jordan's nemesis, renegade GL **Sinestro**, is scheduled for June 2002

release. The final installment, Kyle Rayner, is due in October 2002. Actually marketed by DC Direct as "power ring props," each mini-bust features a unified-design base, with a slot holding a life-size metal reproduction of each character's respective power ring.

As for the super-cool power batteries of Hal and Alan, I'll cover them in an upcoming column focusing on DC Direct's line of props.

As a Green Lantern fan for about 40 years, I must say that I'm extremely pleased with the quantity and quality of GL items produced so far by DC Direct. With one exception. The Hal Jordan component of the triptych of generational Green Lantern statues was a major disappointment, to put it diplomatically.

The concept was great in theory, but problematic in execution. Released one per year beginning in 1998, the trio of interlocking statues depicted all three generations of Earth's Green Lanterns.

Kyle struck an aggressive and dramatic pose as he lunged forward on his segment of the base. Alan rose majestically aloft behind and above his two successors. But Hal...

Hal's body was positioned as if in mid-stride of a brisk walk, his ring hand extended limply before him. His head was horribly malformed, as if he'd taken a side trip through a Warner Brothers cartoon and gotten an anvil dropped on it. His hair was mis-colored, and his face was locked in a grimace suggesting a severe bout of constipation. I've actually been giving serious thought to buying a second copy of the excellent Hal Jordan mini-bust, cutting the head off, and grafting it to the statue. It still wouldn't be perfect, but it would be a vast improvement.

Maybe sculptor **William Paquet**, who'd done such a terrific



Alan Scott, Golden Age GL. 1st mini-bust.



Hal Jordan, Silver Age GL. 2nd of the mini-bust/power ring props.



Kyle Rayner, current GL, 4th mini-busts.



Sinestro, Silver Age Renegade GL, 3rd of the mini-busts.

job on Kyle and Alan was sick that year, and wasn't up to the task. Maybe he just disliked the Hal Jordan character and chose to do a substandard job on him. Whatever the reason, I and many other fans of the Silver-Age GL ran the gamut of reactions to this particular piece, from disappointed, stunned, insulted or offended, to flat-out outraged.

I'm hoping that DC Direct, at some point in the near future, makes it up to the legion of Hal

Jordan fans and gives us a statue worthy of his legend. They should get current lead sculptor **Tim Bruckner**, who did a fantastic job on the very **Neal Adams**-ish Hal Jordan/GL action figure, to handle the assignment. And he did a phenomenal rendition of Hal's former partner **Oliver Queen** in the January 2002-released Green Arrow statue. He's proven he's up to the task; just turn him loose on it.

Or maybe do one of those cover re-creation statues Bruckner does so well; bring to life GL icon **Gil Kane's** cover to Green Lantern (2nd Series) #40, featuring a face-off between Silver- and Golden-Age GLs, as the **Guardians of the Universe** look on. THAT would be a Green Lantern fan's dream come true.



COLLECTABLE CHARACTER STATUES



(above) Hal Jordan full-size statue. 2nd of the GL generations interlocking statues. The only clunker among DC Direct's literally dozens of GL products.

(below) Hal Jordan close-up. Note the flat head and constipated grimace. He probably should have taken some Ex-Lax and had his hair done before modeling for this statue.



Bowen's Marvel License Set to Expire by Mike Wilbur

A press release issued by **Bowen Designs** on January 18, 2002 confirmed a rumor that had been circulating for months. Bowen's license to produce statues and busts based on **Marvel Comics** characters is expiring.

According to Bowen's official press release:

"All right already! Yes, we know you've probably heard the news: Bowen Designs licenses with Marvel are set to expire soon. How soon you ask? Here's the deal: The Mini-bust license is set to expire December of 2002. From the time of this writing (January 2002) we're going to try and release about 20 more busts (after Silver Surfer). The full size statue license is set to expire March 2002 (Storm is the last in our full size series). The mini-statue license will expire in December 2003."

Speculation began last summer, after Marvel had negotiated and signed its new contract with **Diamond Comic Distributors** in late-April 2001. Six weeks later, a press release was issued announcing:

"**Marvel Inks Licensing Agreement with Diamond Select**"

Online industry trade publication **ICv2.com** observed in a 6/7/01 article announcing this new contract:

"...Marvel Comics has signed an 'expansive' three-year licensing agreement with Diamond Select Toys, a sister company of Diamond Comic Distributors. The agreement includes calendars, posters, resins, and seasonal products... Industry rumors abound that Marvel will expand its toy offerings to the specialty market with action figures and statues created and manufactured by Diamond Select..."

That was all it took to get the rumor mill in high gear. Top item on the agenda was, of course, where Bowen Designs was going to fit in this new deal. No one on either side was talking, and Bowen continued soliciting and releasing new Marvel products (albeit at a noticeably accelerated pace). Diamond Select began soliciting mini-busts based on Marvel's **Ultimates** line of characters.

However, Bowen's stepped-up solicitations (from a leisurely bi-monthly full-size statue and monthly mini-bust to one-or-two full-size statues per month, two mini-busts per month, and one mini-statue per month) spoke volumes, even though the involved parties were verbally silent. Obviously, went the speculation, Bowen was racing the clock; rushing to clear all the in-progress projects out of the pipeline before the pipeline collapsed. But, until Bowen's January press release, the actual expiration dates of their contracts with Marvel were a closely guarded secret.

Bowen's Marvel statues and mini-busts will be missed when they end. Randy Bowen set a high standard, and raised the level of the playing field for high-end comic character collectibles. Good luck on your future projects, Randy.

One can only hope that Diamond Select can achieve the degree of quality and style established by Bowen Designs since they landed their Marvel contract in mid-'98. I've seen several Diamond Select prototypes up-close-and-personal, and they look promising. Don't let us down, guys. We're all counting on you. 

Classic Comic Characters

David Scroggy talks about the new line of Syroco-esque figures

Summer of 2000 saw the debut of **Dark Horse Comics'** exciting new product line, the **Classic Comic Characters** statues. Modeled after the "Syroco" figurines of the 1940s, these new statues inspire a sense of instant nostalgia due to their highly accurate replication of the appearance of the hard-to-find originals. The retro-styling evokes images of time-lost treasures found in that old trunk in Grandpa's attic. And the fully illustrated tins the figures come in are also reminiscent of an earlier time when craftsmanship mattered more than recyclability.



So, excited and enamored with the new line of figurines, we went to the source, Dark Horse's Product Development Vice President **David Scroggy**, to get the behind-the-scenes story on how the project came about, how it all works, and what lies ahead.

CBM: How did the program get started? Where did the idea of recreating the 1940s Syroco-style figures originate, and was it

the first concept for this line?

David Scroggy: The idea came from Dark Horse President Mike Richardson. Mike is a big collector of vintage toys, and he always liked the old "Syroco" character statuettes. He asked us to develop a modern day version that evoked these old figurines. We specifically looked at the famous set of King Features characters done as a premium for Farina cereal in 1944.

CBM: What goes into the selection of a character to be one of the figures?

Scroggy: There were a lot of factors. We didn't really survey anyone or have focus groups. We made lots of lists and trusted our judgment. We were trying to balance the characters that we felt were the most important, the ones we thought would sell the best and our personal favorites. As we gain a

sales history, we are finding that the "hits" and "misses" are different in many cases than what we had anticipated.

CBM: Once the character is selected, what are the individual steps in the process before we see a completed figure on sale?

Scroggy: It is a fairly long process. Now that we have Yoe Studios in place for sculpting and have ongoing relationships with vendors for the tin boxes, buttons, booklets and statues themselves we can move in a straightforward way into production.

We start with a budget worksheet and present it internally at Dark Horse. Once approved, we secure any licensing agreements or other contracts that are needed. As the character is sculpted, we go through an approval process: we present the work at various "milestones," such as selection of the pose before the sculptor starts, rough unpainted sculpture, finished unpainted sculpture, painted prototype, production sample. There are similar presentations of the box design, booklet and button. Of course, we must be satisfied ourselves at each stage before we present, so sometimes there are revisions dictated by us and other times there are changes that come from the licensor.

CBM: What is the actual physical composition of the figures? Are they made in the same manner and of the same materials as the original Syrococos, or are they just a simulation?

Scroggy: The statues are made of polyresin. So they just simulate the materials of the old figurines. The word "Syroco" refers to the then-new material of the 1930s, which I believe was an early plastic resin mixed with sawdust. Today's statues are a more sophisticated polymer resin mixed with powdered stone.

The way the manufacturer got the job was to take an original 1944 "Syroco" I had in my office, send it to their facility in China, and create a duplicate. When they sent back the original



CLASSIC COMIC CHARACTERS

and the copy, it was very hard to tell the difference. We also have sculpturally added elements that look like a byproduct of manufacturing, such as the seam lines on the sides, to better simulate the look and feel of the old ones, which were really pretty crudely done.

CBM: There was a long delay between initial solicitation and the release of the first figure. What were the difficulties involved in the production process that caused a six-month delay from the projected first-release date?

Scroggy: Maybe I can best answer this question by copying a letter I wrote to a retailer during the time when we had

solicited five or six characters but hadn't released any yet. It is long, but kind of sums up the reasons for the delay you refer to:

Thanks for your note on the upcoming "Syroco"-style figures known collectively as Classic Comic Characters statues. I quite understand that you are tired of waiting for them. We apologize that the series has taken so long to ship.

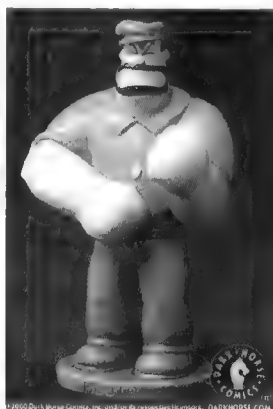
This series, which we envision as the beginning of at least a ten-year program, had several unexpected challenges. All were

successfully met (we think) and the final result will hopefully be well worth the wait for you and your customers.

We have 28 statues in various stages of production at this time, with many more being planned. One of the most difficult aspects of getting these statues finished was not the statues themselves, but the litho-printed tin boxes they are packaged in. Normally, companies that make tin boxes have a minimum order quantity of 10,000 per design for the kind of full color printing we required. So finding a manufacturer that was willing to work with our small print runs (under 1,000 for many of the early titles) was difficult.

After this hurdle was passed, we had to determine a method of packing the statue, booklet and button into a tin box so it looked nice and still protected the statue. We wanted to find a way for the purchaser to be able to see the piece when opening the box, yet still have the statues be protected. We came up with a solution of having a custom, two-piece vacuformed PVC holding device made for each sculpture, then surrounded that with laser-cut black

foam rubber. The effect is pretty good, and the pieces should now be safe and secure. There were also a lot of hand-work



CLASSIC COMIC CHARACTERS

details, such as slipping in a small piece of foam between break points. This does not excuse our lateness, but simply is an attempt to provide some details to explain why we were so late.

Since we plan on continuing these statues for as long as we are able to, I felt it was vital to get the whole package right before we released any. Our



delays have frustrated retailers like yourself, and again I apologize. I hope when you get your order soon you will write me back and let me know if you thought it was worth the wait.

CBM: How much freedom do you have in the creative process?

Scroggy: Regarding creative freedom, let me say that most good licensee/licensor arrangements are a partnership. There has to be mutual trust. Since we are creating a "retro" look that may be different than the way characters are depicted today, we are very careful to make sure that the licensor understands this up front. It avoids any misunderstandings. For the most part, the copyright holders have understood what we are up to and have been happy with the results.

CBM: To date, there have been 23 of the first wave of 36 figures released. The latter third seems to be significantly delayed. Is there one particular problem at issue, or does it vary with each character?

Scroggy: There have been some inconsistencies in our solicitations lately. Mostly due to the fact that we are consciously trying to slow down a little. As we review the program, we think that we were too aggressive in releasing so many figures so quickly. Even though the pieces are fairly priced at \$49.95, when you put out so many so fast you are asking collectors to make a pretty big financial commitment if they want to collect them all. We heard from several retailers and collectors that fans could not afford to keep up. So we



Dark Horse Statues Release Sequence

The following is a list of the Dark Horse Comics Classic Comic Characters statues released, scheduled, or planned so far. Note that release #24, Walt Kelly's Pogo, has been delayed due to some pre-production complications. Numbers 31 and higher are tentative, and may be subject to schedule or sequence change.

Release Number/Name	Date	Ed. Size	Comments
Classic Comic Char. #01: Krazy Kat	2000	550	Released
Classic Comic Char. #02: Popeye	2000	550	Released
Classic Comic Char. #03: Prince Valiant	2000	550	Released
Classic Comic Char. #04: The Phantom	2000	750	Released
Classic Comic Char. #05: Ignatz	2000	750	Released
Classic Comic Char. #06: Olive Oyl	2000	750	Released
Classic Comic Char. #07: Mandrake	2000	750	Released
Classic Comic Char. #08: Li'l Abner	2000	950	Released
Classic Comic Char. #09: Daisy Mae	2000	950	Released
Classic Comic Char. #10: Dick Tracy	2000	950	Released
Classic Comic Char. #11: Beetle Bailey	2000	950	Released
Classic Comic Char. #12: Sarge	2000	950	Released
Classic Comic Char. #13: Little Orphan Annie	2000	950	Released
Classic Comic Char. #14: Flash Gordon	2000	950	Released
Classic Comic Char. #15: Terry	2000	950	Released
Classic Comic Char. #16: Dragon Lady	2000	950	Released
Classic Comic Char. #17: Fearless Fossdick	2001	950	Released
Classic Comic Char. #18: Felix the Cat	2001	600	Released
Classic Comic Char. #19: Dagwood	2001	600	Released
Classic Comic Char. #20: Blondie	2001	600	Released
Classic Comic Char. #21: Smokey Stover	2001	600	Released
Classic Comic Char. #22: Wimpy	2001	600	Released
Classic Comic Char. #23: Bluto	2001	600	Released
Classic Comic Char. #24: Pogo	2002	600	Solicited; Not yet released
Classic Comic Char. #25: Albert	2001	600	Released
Classic Comic Char. #26: Nancy	2001	600	Released
Classic Comic Char. #27: Sluggo	2001	600	Released
Classic Comic Char. #28: Alley Oop	2002	600	Released
Classic Comic Char. #29: Little Nemo	2002	600	Released
Classic Comic Char. #30: Yellow Kid	2002	600	Solicited; Not yet released
Classic Comic Char. #31: Shmoo	2002	600	Not yet solicited
Classic Comic Char. #32: Little Lulu	2002	600	Not yet solicited
Classic Comic Char. #33: Tubby	2002	600	Not yet solicited
Classic Comic Char. #34: The Spirit	2002	600	Not yet solicited
Classic Comic Char. #35: Buck Rogers	2002	600	Not yet solicited
Classic Comic Char. #36:	2002	600	Not yet solicited



are slowing down, and doing fewer multi-character releases (Beetle & Sarge, Li'l Abner & Daisy Mae, Nancy & Sluggo, etc.). At the same time, it has taken us longer than we thought on Pogo and Albert, which messed up the order of the releases, creating some confusion.

CBM: What are the prospects, at this time, of the line continuing beyond the first wave of 36 figures?

Scroggy: Pretty good, I'd say. We have always envisioned this as an ongoing program, so I hope that there are hundreds someday.

CBM: If the line continues, is there a time-period limit for the characters represented? Will we continue to see only characters contemporary to the original '40s Syroco releases, or will we start to see newer characters from the '50s or '60s?

Scroggy: There is no set time period, really. We will get around to doing contemporary characters also, and even have plans for a few. By the way, Beetle Bailey and Sarge are from the 1950s, so we have even done some slightly more recent ones already.

CBM: What has the feedback been like from retailers and collectors?

Scroggy: Generally quite good as far as the actual product goes. The issues we have listened to from feedback are the speed and number of releases mentioned above, and the edition size.

Our goal in determining the number of statues in the edition is to have enough quantity to meet all the initial orders and then quickly sell out.

The first few releases, at 550, were way oversold and had to be allocated. We then made the decision to increase the run to 950. In hindsight, this was too many. Anyway, we then reduced the edition size back down to 600, beginning with Felix the Cat. That one sold out, so we are sticking with 600 for awhile.

CBM: What are your personal favorites so far?

Scroggy: I like them all, really. I could mention Smokey Stover. He hasn't sold as well as some of the others, but I hope that by doing this piece we can encourage some of today's fans to discover this wonderfully zany, nutty, surreal comic strip. Look it up—it's a hoot! 

Executive Editor J.C. Vaughn also contributed to this interview. Special thanks to Christopher Beeson at Dark Horse for the assistance.



© 1999 Dark Horse Comics, Inc. and/or its respective licensors. DAK1000001

Comics2Film Digest

by Rob Worley

Editor's note: With this issue, we're pleased to welcome Internet columnist Rob Worley (comics2film.com) to the CBM ranks. His column will feature the top comic character-related movie and television news. If you're interested in an upcoming project we haven't covered, drop us a line at CBM@gemstonepub.com and let us know.

THE HULK

Marvel and Universal Studio's *The Hulk* is shaping up to be an exciting comic based movie project. Eric Bana (*Black Hawk Down*) is set to star as both Dr. Banner and the creature itself. Filmmakers are mum about how Bana will pull off the role of the half-ton green giant, but we suspect computer trickery will be involved.

Jennifer Connelly (*A Beautiful Mind*) plays Betty Ross. Sam Elliot (*We Were Soldiers*) will play General Thunderbolt Ross. Nick Nolte plays Banner's brilliant but abusive father.

Critical darling Ang Lee (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) will direct from a script by David Hayter (*X-Men*) and James Schamus (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*).

The producers are currently scouting locations in California for the film, including University of California Berkeley. Word is that the filmmakers are interested in The Berkley Lab's Advanced Light Source building with its distinctive dome-shape.

DAREDEVIL

Marvel's Man Without Fear is making his way into production. The movie is set to film this spring and the four primary roles have been cast.

Fans can look for Ben Affleck (*Pearl Harbor*) to portray the blind hero. Michael Clarke Duncan (*The Green Mile*) is Wilson Fisk (a.k.a. The Kingpin). Caught in the middle is

Jennifer Garner (*Alias*) as Elektra. Finally, Colin Farrell (*American Outlaws*) will play Bullseye.

Casting on Elektra took three months after Affleck signed on. Marvel Studios' Kevin Feige, the movie's executive producer, told "Comics2Film" that they were approaching the casting cautiously. "It's very important because we see her not only as the kick-ass female lead in the *Daredevil* movie but we see her spinning off in her own movies," Feige said.

Mark Steven Johnson (*Grumpy Old Men*) is set to direct.

BLADE 2

There's been much for comic fans to enjoy on TV this month with Evan Dorkin's *The Eltingville Club* airing on Cartoon Network and Hermann Huppen's *Jeremiah* debuting on Showtime earlier this month. They aren't the only adaptation fans can look forward to in March. The much-anticipated *Blade 2* is due in theaters on March 22.

Wesley Snipes and Kris Kristofferson return to their roles from the first movie. In the sequel, Blade is forced to team up with a pack of vampires to combat evil super-vampires called The Reapers.

David Goyer, who penned the original, wrote and produced the sequel. Guillermo del Toro (*The Devil's Backbone*) is behind the camera this time.

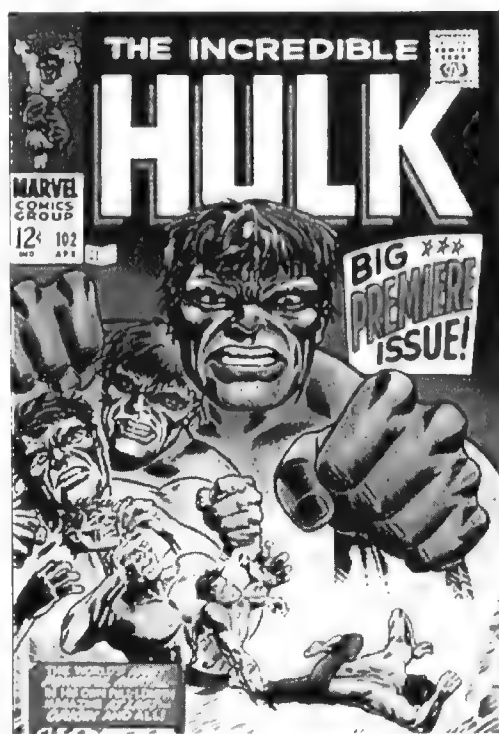
LADY DEATH

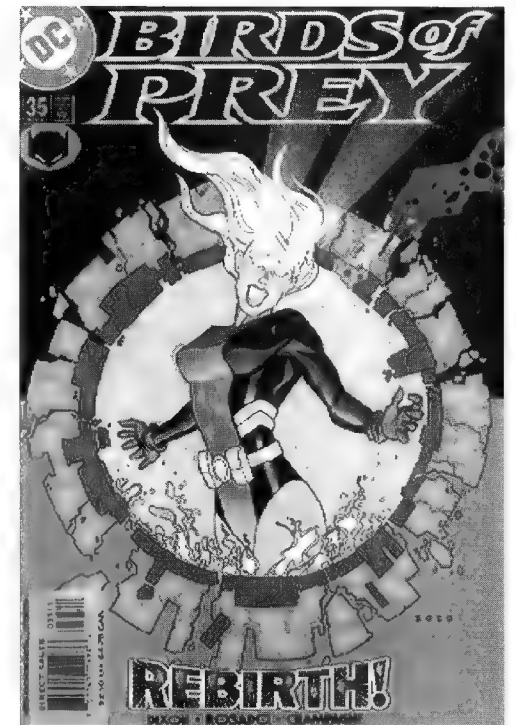
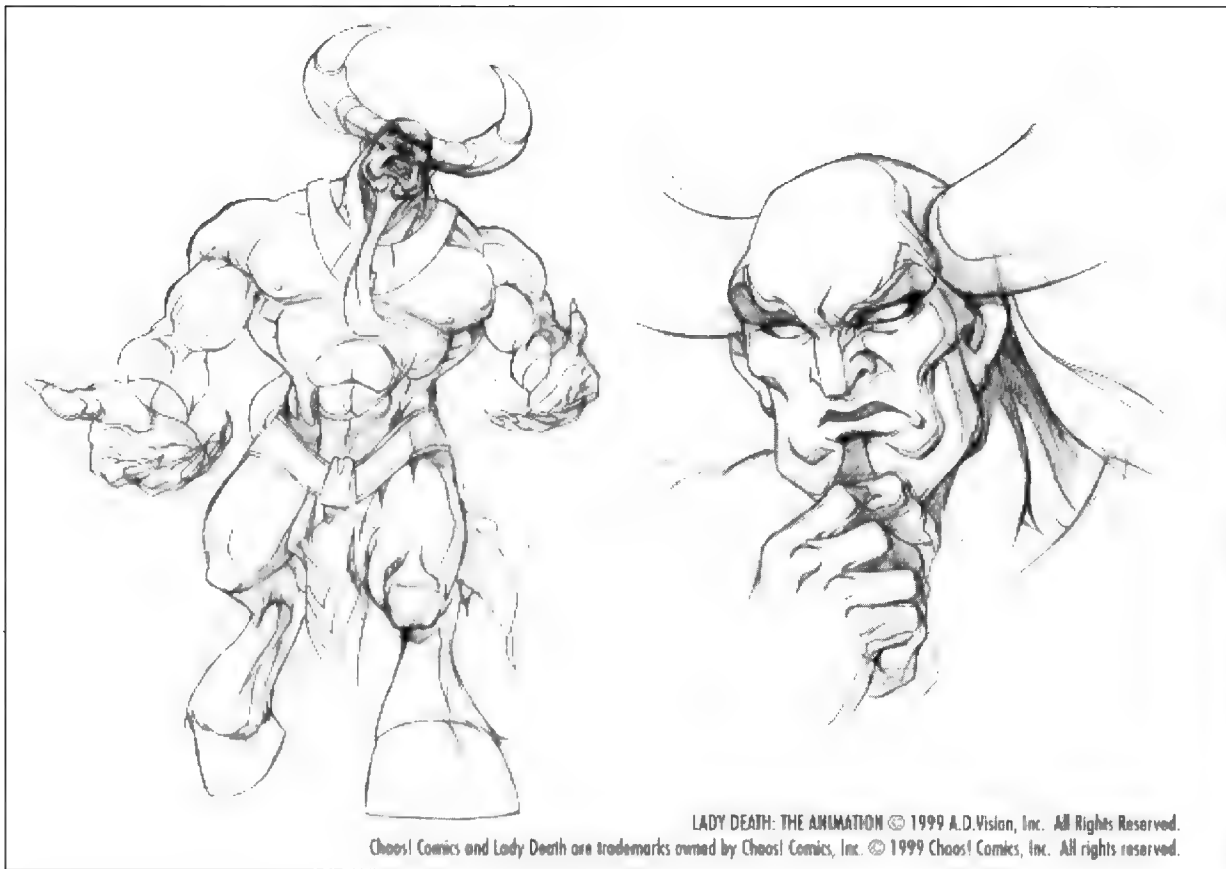
Production on the long-in-development *Lady Death* animated feature is set to begin soon. ADV Films has selected a production team. Co-producers Carl Macek and Andy Orjuela have been to Asia working with artists at SunMin Image Pictures Co., Ltd. under the supervision of director Young H. Sang, to begin the arduous process of creating the animation.

The original screenplay, written by Macek, who also serves as director, revisits the origin of Lady Death. The script is said to be a faithful adaptation of Chaos! Comics founder Brian Pulido's original story.

The actual production of *Lady Death* should take a year to complete for a target 2003 release.

SPIDER-MAN ANIMATED





Hot on the heels of the soon-to-be released *Spider-Man* feature film, Sony is also developing an animated show that spins out of the movie continuity. Mainframe Entertainment, known for such Saturday morning fare as *Reboot* and *Transformers: Beast Machines* is doing the animation for the show.

The great news is that *Ultimate Spider-Man* writer Brian Michael Bendis is a writer and executive producer on the show.

The show will be CGI, but will not have the look of previous computer-animated programs. "You have never seen CGI like this. Forget what you are picturing. It does not look like that," Bendis said.

Marsha Griffin (*Starship Troopers*, *Max Steel*), Marty Isenberg and Kevin Hopps are also on board as writers.

BIRDS OF PREY

The folks who brought *Smallville* to the WB are currently hard at work developing a pilot based on DC Comics' Batman spin-off *Birds of Prey*.

The pilot script by Laeta Kalogridis (*Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*) features Oracle, who appears much as she does in the comics. However, her primary partner will be The Huntress. The Black Canary is part of the line up but, in the most radical departure from the book, she is to be depicted as a 16-year-old runaway with telekinetic and telepathic abilities.

Insiders told "Comics2Film" that the decision to utilize the Huntress in the Black Canary role is due to a desire to play up the connections to Batman. Indeed, this version of the Huntress is said to be the love child of Batman and Catwoman. Unlike the global adventures of the comics, the show will be based in a near-future, post-Batman Gotham.

The latest word is that a young actress named Rachel Skarsten (*Angels in the Infield*) has been cast to play the Black Canary. Dina Meyer (*Starship Troopers*) is rumored to be the lead contender for the part of Oracle.

THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN

Work on the big screen adaptation of Alan Moore's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* kicked into high gear when director Stephen Norrington (*Blade*) came on board in December.

"We already have designers and producers doing pre-production and plan to ramp them up substantially after the New Year," Norrington told "Comics2Film." "I'm looking forward to it!" In February Twentieth Century Fox sent crews to Prague to scout locations.

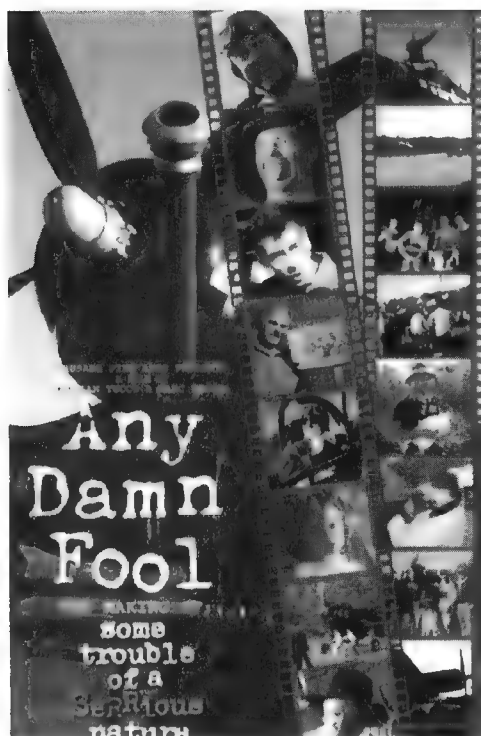
More recently Sean Connery has come on board to fill the shoes of Allan Quartermain in the film. James Robinson (*Starman*) wrote the screenplay. Don Murphy (*From Hell*) is producing.

ALAN MOORE KEVIN O'NEILL

the LEAGUE OF
EXTRAORDINARY
GENTLEMEN



BEN DIMAGMALIW BILL OAKLEY
VOL. 1



ASTERIX AND OBELIX: MISSION CLEOPATRA

Asterix and Obelix: Mission Cleopatra enjoyed a big, but not record-setting opening in France at the end of January. The film reportedly sold 629,148 tickets on a record 957 screens making it the #2 opener in the history of French cinema.

The \$46 million *Asterix and Obelix: Mission Cleopatra* is said to be the most expensive French movie ever made.

Last June, Miramax Films purchased the U.S. distribution rights for both *Mission Cleopatra* and its 1999 predecessor *Asterix and Obelix vs. Caesar*. The studio plans to release *Mission Cleopatra* first.

SOME TROUBLE OF A SeRRIOUS NATURE

Post-production work is underway on *Shi* creator Billy Tucci's indie short film *Some Trouble of a SeRRious Nature*. Tucci shot the movie late last year on Long Island. It centers on two hapless country boys who come into possession of a F4U-4 Corsair warplane and the misadventures that ensue.

Tucci's been busy editing the movie as well as working up promotional materials. In addition to the film Tucci is work-

ing on a making-of documentary called *Any Damn Fool*.

The comic-creator-turned-filmmaker plans to have the film completed on April 1. He then hopes to screen it at air shows and all the major film festivals. He plans to release DVDs and VHS tapes with both films on them.

MEPHISTO

Producer Joe Singer (*Dr. Dolittle*, *Dante's Peak*) has entered into a partnership with entrepreneur and Hollywood newcomer Janet Jensen to form Singer/Jensen Entertainment. The new shingle has scooped up several properties for development, including Jason Hall and Matt Kindt's *Mephisto* from Top Shelf Comics.

The screenplay for *Mephisto* is to be written by Michael Browning (*Bad Company*, *Six Days, Seven Nights*). The story involves a couple with a troubled marriage who attend a magic show. The woman volunteers for the disappearing act but the magician (Mephisto) dies in the middle of the trick. With the wife missing the husband embarks on a metaphysical journey to bring her back. 🐉



Asterix and Obelix: Mission Cleopatra, featuring Christian Clavier as Asterix and Gerard Depardieu as Obelix



The Michael Naiman Report Pedigrees, Variants, Dennis, UGs

Greetings from the Comic Curmudgeon! I'll keep my biased observations and whistle blowing to a minimum this month. Maybe those toes I've been stepping on need to heal for a month or so! (Or at least until someone attempts another outrage against the hobby!)

Seems as if there have been more and more **pedigree** and named collections popping up recently. The line is quickly being blurred between the two. What exactly IS a pedigree? How does it differ from a "named collection"?

Those collectors to whom I have spoken have voiced the opinion that a pedigree collection is one that has actually been designated more by the buying public's acceptance and acknowledgement through purchases than by someone standing on a stump and saying, "Hey! Look who I am! I've collected (and purchased) these over the years and now I'm slabbing them and selling them in an auction!"

A pedigree collection can display a common characteristic that is identifiable throughout the run of books. Like the "L" in Larson, the "D" in the Denver collection. How about the Salida collection with the "Magnum Sporting Goods" store stamp? Hmmm...does that mean that the Mohawk Valley books that have a common characteristic of tanning on the covers could be considered a pedigree? What do you think?

Another very important identifiable factor is condition. There should be a consistent grade throughout—most collectors prefer (and concur) that it be a high grade! I've never heard of a pedigree collection in VG before, have you? Once collectors are aware of and have seen a high-grade pedigree book, they know what to expect from others in that collection. Oftentimes sight unseen! And they are willing to pay a premium for the privilege of owning it!

For me, the story behind the collection can be an important factor. Tell me about the person behind the collection. I want to know the Who, What, When, Where and Why about these comics. That always adds to the mystique of what we collect and makes the particular book special to own.

After a few of my reports on **variants** and **Mark Jeweler inserts** I get the following from our readers:

Scott Mahaffy of Toronto, Canada writes about the Mark Jeweler inserts variants he has collected, "Not too long ago, I purchased a large run of Marvel Team-Ups. I noticed these strange inserts for a jewelry shop in California, so I assumed they must

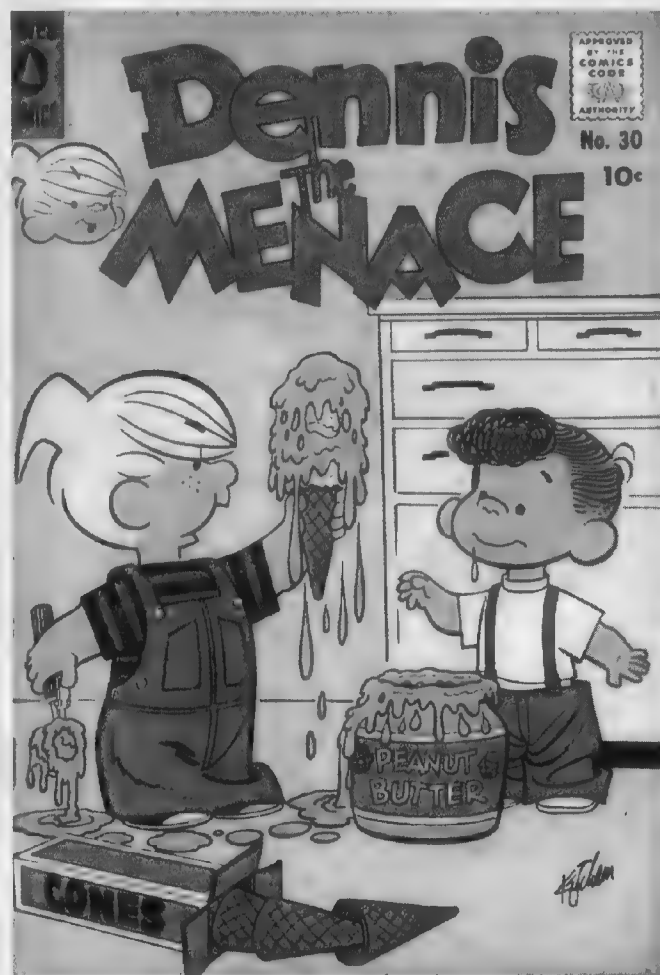
have been inserted on a regional level. I certainly never saw these ads here in Toronto. The theory about it being intended for people in the military makes sense judging from the Armed Forces rings for sale. I just wanted to let you know that I have the following Marvel Team-Up with the inserts: #42 (coupon is cut), 64, 66, 69, 75, 78, 80, 93, 103, 106, 108, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 124, 127, 138, 139 and 143. As these pop up over a span of 100 issues, it is clear that the ads ran well into the '80s, as the later issues have Spidey in his alien costume. I don't know why all of mine don't have the insert (only some do) as I bought them all from the same person. As this is only one title, I would assume there are a lot more comics out there with the Mark Jeweler insert."

John Petty of Coram, New York contacted me about the DC/Whitman variants and reports that he has examples of Action Comics #495 and #499, Brave and Bold #147, DC Comics Presents #9, Justice League of America #166 and Superman #335 and #339.

From **Jeff Rader** comes a sighting of 40¢ DC/Whitman variants to add to the Action #481 (03/78, no cover price), #483 (no cover price), #497 (40¢ cover), #502 (40¢ cover) and Wonder Woman #252 (40¢ cover).

Jamie Newbold of Southern California Comics has dug up an interesting little gem "From the Files of Obscure Comic Book Knowledge, there is a discrepancy in the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide; **Dennis the Menace** #31 from Pines lists this issue as the first appearance of Joey. However, we have issue #30 and Joey is featured on the cover. Go figure!"

Hippy Comix, Inc., the newest publishing venture of Dan Fogel and Jim Pitts, has begun production on The Hippy Comix **Underground Price Guide**, First Edition: 1962-2002. Fogel and Pitts, Senior Overstreet Advisors, and known in retailing circles as the Comic Detectives, have been publishing Underground comic books since 1998 as Fogelcomix. Currently planned as a full color, 8 1/2" by 11", approximately 200-page book,



CBM MarketWatch

A report of market indicator sales (including % of Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide) by Michael Naiman

Adventure

#57 GD \$160 76%
#66 VG- \$295 67%
#78 VG+ \$332 93%
#97 GD+ \$118 1.28X
#112 VG \$169 1.34X
#154 VG \$85 1.03X
#166 VG \$65 79%
#189 VG \$170 2.13X
#282 FN- \$54 86%

Amazing Adult Fantasy

#7 VG+ \$80 80%
#9 VG+ \$71 90%
#12 VF+ \$330 1.12X
#13 VG+ \$90 1.14X

Amazing Spider-Man

#1 VG- \$1,025 64%
#5 VG- \$177 67%
#10 VG+ \$158 Guide
#13 VG \$125 1.02X
#14 VG \$355 1.18X
#24 FN \$36 51%
#27 VF \$275 1.33X
#31 VF \$81 61%
#33 VG \$29 76%
#34 VF- \$75 56%
#39 VF+ \$250 1.43X
#40 VF- \$275 1.1X
#42 NM \$455 2.6X
#45 NM \$255 2.04X
#49 NM \$205 1.64X
#50 FN+ \$150 1.22X
#52 NM \$228 2.53X
#80 NM \$17 34%
#81 NM \$30 60%
#83 VF \$11 35%
#86 VF+ \$36 1.13X
#87 VF+ \$27 85%
#121 VF+ \$250 2.63X

Avengers

#4 VF \$811 67%
#13 NM \$175 1.30X
#57 FN \$23 Guide
#100 VF- \$42 83%

Batman

#23 VG+ \$292 69%
#121 FN+ \$99 77%
#209 VF- \$15 82%

Brave and Bold

#18 FN \$38 38%

Captain America

#100 NM \$551 1.38X
#110 VF- \$29 70%
#111 VF+ \$36 87%
#113 VF- \$27 65%

Chamber of Chills

#24 FN \$80 1.06X

Claire Voyant

#4 VF \$190 67%

Combat Kelly (Marvel)

#1 NM \$23 1.27X

Conan

#1 NM \$172 72%
#2 NM \$108 1.27X

Coo Coo

#41 FN+ \$25 47%

Crime SuspensStories

#22 GD \$27 1.42X

Daredevil

#2 VG+ \$113 1.34X
#4 VF \$165 81%
#8 VF+ \$76 80%
#50 VF \$14 86%

Fantastic Four

#2 FN+ \$811 1.03X
#8 VG \$101 73%
#15 VG+ \$62 1.06X
#47 VF+ \$38 75%

Fight

#53 VG+ \$45 1.13X

Flash

#151 VF \$76 92%

Frontier Western

#8 FN+ \$21 81%

Frontline Combat

#12 VG+ \$22 97%

Green Lantern

#1 GD \$150 70%
#5 FN \$84 90%
#6 FN- \$79 90%
#9 FN- \$54 79%
#40 VF \$266 79%

House of Mystery

#147 VF- \$31 70%
#154 FN \$16 84%

Hulk

#3 VG- \$203 86%
#4 VG \$228 1.03X
#103 VF \$45 79%
#108 VF+ \$42 1.02X
#109 VF \$23 80%

Iron Man

#7 NM \$31 62%

Justice League of America

#26 FN \$29 85%
#28 VF \$61 77%
#31 VF \$57 75%
#32 VF+ \$57 1.06X
#50 NM- \$55 Guide
#72 VF \$23 90%

Marvel Tales

#2 NM \$94 90%

M.D.

#1 NM \$76 63%

Mystery Tales

#46 FN \$30 50%

Nick Fury

#1 VF \$42 60%
#2 VF- \$27 85%
#3 VF \$23 72%

Police

#2 FN \$250 27%

Rangers

#43 VG+ \$40 1.06X

Sgt Fury

#4 VF- \$42 30%
#5 VF+ \$100 71%
#6 VF \$41 48%
#8 VF \$37 43%

Silver Surfer

#1 VF \$248 77%
#1 NM \$495 94%
#4 VF \$229 76%
#4 NM \$415 86%
#5 NM \$115 1.05X
#15 NM \$95 1.46X

Spellbound

#27 VG+ \$32 94%

Strange Tales

#115 VF \$140 45%
#129 NM \$53 96%
#135 FN+ \$36 1.09X
#151 VF+ \$29 76%

Sub-Mariner (SA)

#3 VF \$18 71%
#4 VF \$18 71%
#6 VF \$15 67%
#7 VF \$15 67%
#9 VF+ \$16 72%

Superboy

#7 GD \$75 86%
#14 VG+ \$134 1.02X
#15 VG \$88 67%
#35 VG \$35 56%
#43 GD \$34 1.3X
#53 GD \$18 Guide
#68 VG+ \$90 82%
#86 FN \$32 64%

Tales of Suspense

#46 FN+ \$63 93%
#58 VF \$198 1.04X
#59 VF- \$91 48%
#63 VF+ \$125 82%

Tales to Astonish

#36 VF+ \$460 1.10X
#56 VF \$59 84%
#60 FN \$46 85%

Thing, The

#12 GD \$90 1.13X
#14 GD \$90 1.13X

Thrilling

#73 FN+ \$61 46%

Tomb of Dracula

#1 NM \$135 1.13X

Tower of Shadows

#5 NM- \$28 1.16X
#9 NM- \$32 Guide

Uncle Scrooge

#13 NM \$250 1.5X
#18 NM \$250 1.5X
#28 NM \$210 1.5X

Weird Horrors

#9 FN- \$200 1.66X

Where Creatures Roam

#4 NM \$18 Guide
#5 NM \$18 Guide
#6 NM \$18 Guide
#7 NM \$18 Guide
#8 NM \$18 Guide
#9 NM \$18 Guide

Where Monsters Dwell

#9 NM \$22 1.22X
#10 NM \$22 1.22X

X-Men

#2 VG \$158 55%
#3 VF+ \$480 1.02X
#8 FN+ \$103 1.10X
#96 FN \$27 Guide

this combination price guide, history, and anthology of cutting-edge adult comix has a front cover by Paul Mavrides (Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers), and interior illustrations by Hal Robins (UG!3K). Other Masters of the Underground such as S Clay Wilson (Checkered Demon) and Spain (Zap Comix) will contribute unpublished, brand new art and stories. "The demand has been building for over ten years for us to write a new Underground price guide," Fogel said. "Because of our unique perspective as Underground publishers and creators, as well as surviving a quarter century of retailing and distribution, Jim and I are in the unenviable position of being the best qualified guys to write this thing! We are proud to announce that we have finally begun production on the beast, and despite a full workload of comics publishing we hope to have it out by the end of the year. We have established an international network of retailer, distributor, creator, and collector advisors, led by Apex Novelties' Don Donahue, the original publisher of Zap Comix, and the leading authority on Undergrounds."

Hippy Comix, Inc.'s publishing and distribution co-op-producing creator owned books, magazines, and multi-media Member imprints include: Kieron Dwyer's Lowest Comic Denominator, S S Crompton's Carnal Comics, and Larry and Sharon Welz's Cherry Comics. Hippy Comix's in-house imprints and titles include: Adult Star Stories, UG!3K, Crumb and Friends' Snatch Comics in Color, Spain's Zodiac Mindwarp and S Clay Wilson's Pork.

Hippy Comix is also branching out with two new general-audience imprints. The first, Octocomix, specializes in high-end prints and books showcasing some of the classic Golden and Silver Age creators including Shelly Moldoff (Batman), Jim Mooney (Supergirl), Bob Bolling (Little Archie) and the Dan DeCarlo (Josie and the Pussycats) Estate. Rounding out this year's plans is a collaboration with Uri Fink, one of Israel's top cartoonists. Co-created by Dan Fogel, the non-P.C. series Fink!!! is a silly but biting blend of political satire and pop culture parody, under the provocative imprint, Elders of Zion Comics.

Anyone interested in being an advisor, advertiser, or pre-ordering copies at a discount should contact Fogel at hippycomix@aol.com, or PO Box 20474, El Sobrante, CA 94820.

Keep those cards, letters and opinions rolling in. See you in 30. 📬

MARKET REPORTS



**Jamie Newbold
/Gino Siragusa**

SoCal Comics
8280 Clairmont Mesa Blvd #124
San Diego, CA 92111
858-715-8669
socalcom@aol.com

I'm sitting at the typewriter, my eyes wandering over to the television when a commercial comes on, promoting some TV show. That upcoming episode features a character coming to terms with some inner fantasy, wearing a homemade super-hero costume. That makes the ninth or tenth reference to a comic book character I've seen or heard on TV or radio in a week's time. In fact, I've noticed references to the comic book world on television, radio and the movies for weeks. Just passing comments or full-blown storylines. But, a free plug nonetheless. Some of the comments are light. Others are more poignant. Certainly proof that **comic books are popular among entertainment writers and ad men.** From Beat The Geeks game show to Witchblade to plumbing commercials to Saturday Night Live, the entertainment and commercial broadcast industry acknowledges the importance of our beloved comic books as source material for ideas and recognizable icons. Hence, the importance of the upcoming Spider-Man movie.

Comic books have enjoyed recent, **positive publicity.** Good comic book movies have brought the uninitiated

into the theaters to appreciate characters we've grown up with. But, is it enough to induce new blood to read and collect comics? We are seeing a trickle of new comic book readers enter our store. We see a smattering of new back issue collectors e-mail us for old comic books. When the X-Men movie hit the theaters we saw a definite increase in the sales of X-Men back issues. We had not seen that phenomenon since the release of the Spawn movie. Those sales were nothing compared to the sheer quantity of X-Men comics to buy. With the motivation for those back issue sales in mind, we began seeing the predictable increase in Spider-Man comic books months ago. In fact, we are enjoying a double-whammy, of sorts. The quality of the current crop of newsstand Spider-Man comic books is good and draws readers in while the back issues are selling at a renaissance pace. That one-two punch began months ago—long before the increased sales preceding the X-Men movie. Is this another indicator of the growing popularity of comic books among those newly-initiated to our hobby? We believe so. We believe that this is another sign that comic book sales have survived the mid-90s slump and have yet to reach a sales peak.

Golden Age Sales: Al Capp's Shmoo #1 FN- \$56; Beware Terror Tales #6 FN \$73; Eerie (Avon) #12 GD/VG \$52; Batman #66 GD \$85, #93 VG \$84; Captain Marvel Adventures #21 restored \$180; Captain Marvel Jr. #12 FN \$170; Iwo Jima #12 (2) GD/VG \$45; Mystery Tales #11 GD \$30, #21 GD/VG \$32.50; Mystic (Atlas horror) #23 FN \$63; Rulah #21 GD/VG \$150; Tales of Justice #63 VG \$20; 3-D Three Stooges #3 GD/VG \$55; Uncle Scrooge Four Color #386 F/VF \$750; Walt Disney Comics & Stories #130 FN \$20; War Comics (Atlas) #1 VG \$50; Weird Fantasy #16 (9) FN \$153; Weird Science #20 GD/VG \$50; Weird Terror #5 FN- \$100.

Silver Age Sales: Adventure Comics #247 VG/FN \$900; Amazing Fantasy #15 FN \$3300, #15 GD/VG(R) \$1200; Amazing Spider-Man #1 FN- \$2300, #60 FN+ \$25, #62 VF- \$25, #63 FN+ \$20, #90 FN \$19, #96 FN+ \$35; Batman #151

THE MARKET

VF- \$55, #200 FN \$36, #201 VF \$20; Brave and the Bold #45 VF- \$45, #57 FN+ \$55; Incredible Hulk #1 restored \$900, #4 restored \$100; Iron Man #35 VF \$11; Metal Men #1 NM- \$625; Our Army At War #55 VG/FN \$32.50; Showcase #37 NM- \$700, #37 FN \$161, #38 NM- \$425; Star Spangled War Stories #28 VG \$35; Superman #149 VF \$100; Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane #37 VF- \$45; X-Men #32 VF+ \$55.

Bronze Age Sales: Amazing Spider-Man #121 FN+ \$60; Incredible Hulk #181 VF- \$425; Weird Western #20 VF \$10, #21 VF/NM \$7; X-Men #113 NM \$45, #115 NM- \$45.

Tom Gordon

Monumental Collectibles

PO Box 287

Westminster, MD 21158

410-848-0275

www.monumentalcollectibles.com

Moncollect@aol.com

It seems like the comic book market is just continuing to roar onward and upward. After the MastroNet sale of a CGC 8.0 Detective #27, we had a new record price paid for a comic. In no time this record has been smashed by the sale of the "pay copy" of Marvel Comics #1 CGC 9.0 for \$350,000. The one question everyone is asking is when will comics break the **million dollar barrier** and which book will it be? The high-end market is moving upward constantly with some wondering what's next and how will this affect the comic market as a whole? It's too early to tell where this trend is taking us and only "The Shadow Knows" for sure!

Platinum Age comics are continuing to sell when the supply is available. These books continue to be very difficult to locate in any grade. To date we have only seen two very high grade CGC graded Platinum Age comics. We recently saw a Buster Brown's Experiences with Pond's Extract (nn) 1904 CGC VF+ 8.5 offered. It will be interesting to see how the marketplace responds to high-grade Platinum Age comics. An 8.0 is the highest grade in the Guide for a Platinum

Age book and this is equal to a 9.4 in any other comic.

CGC books continue to move very well. We are seeing more interest in some of the mid-grade books. Some books never turn up in high grade and locating any copy can be difficult. Across the board we are seeing anything CGC 9.4 and up moving quickly. We also know of numerous collectors who have sent books in as they were unsure if a book was restored or not. CGC is putting a lot of collector's minds at ease regarding restoration.

Character Toys and Premiums are selling well. We do see the modern secondary toy market shifting more rapidly than ever before. This week's hot toy on eBay selling for \$30 may be only \$9.99 a week later as more examples enter into the market. There is also growing interest in collectibles and comics related to upcoming movies. With Star Wars Episode II and Spider-Man just around the corner anything is possible. Till next month Happy Hunting!!

Patrick Marchbanks

Golden Age Comics and Games

PO Box 8822

Gulfport, MS 39506

228-860-0256 (phone)

228-896-5472 (fax)

www.GoldenAgeCollectibles.com

We've made it though the first months of 2002 and so far everything has been moving along excellently. Books have been selling well both online and off. Mid-grade Silver Age has seen a **slight increase** of sales so far in 2002 and has been selling an average of five to 10% above Guide prices.

CGC Golden and Silver Age **encapsulated books** have been selling steadily with no real change. There has been a small degree of change in regard to the demand for CGC restored books. Many collectors seem to be shying away from any books that are given a CGC restored label. This is surprising because for the most part unslabbed restored books have been selling remarkably well.

Conventions and auctions are just around the corner with MegaCon only a

few weeks away and the second Heritage Premier Auction to be held in March. The Heritage auction is shaping up very nicely and has many extraordinary lots that will be available. Both of these events look very promising and I would encourage anyone that has the time to make the trip to do so.

Recent Sales include: Amazing Spider-Man #3 VG \$300; Flash Comics #1 CGC App. FN/VF \$6200; Incredible Hulk #3 CGC VG/FN \$312; Superman #1 PR (coverless) \$2000; Tales of Suspense #39 VG/FN \$525; Whiz Comics #51 CGC NM+ 9.6 (Rockford) \$1000; X-Men #2 FN \$420.

Michael Tierney

Collector's Edition

North Little Rock, AR 72116

The Comic Book Store

Little Rock, AR 72227

The comics industry may be poised at another crossroads. Interest seems to be picking back up, with new readers looking for something different—like import manga ranging from Lone Wolf and Cub to Saint Tail. The Dark Knight Strikes Again sequel to The Dark Knight Returns has also tied in well with a recent renewed interest in **old-fashioned** types of **heroes**. The combination of the two continues to bring back customers who originally collected comics in the Eighties, and can now afford the Silver Age comics they always admired.

Spider-Man is drawing a lot of anticipation for the new movie, but after strong sales last month, interest disappeared on the Silver Age comics after the returning customers tried the more recent variety. Even the issues by J. Michael Straczynski are being lambasted by the former Marvel Zombies. In defense of Straczynski, he has a lot of repair work to be done in order to turn this title around by the movie's release.

Superman is leading the way for **DC sales**, with notable issues of a run from #150 through #202 being: #150 FN \$25, #161 (first death of Ma and Pa Kent) near FN \$19, #167 VG+ \$19, #199 (first SM/Flash race) VG+ \$47.50, and #202 VF+ \$19.75. Other DCs are JLA #8 VG+ \$69; Atom #12 (GA Atom app) VG+ \$12;

Batman #186 VF \$16; and Detective #317 FN \$18.

Marvel examples are Iron Man #1 VG \$69, #8 VF \$17.50, #9 VG+ \$19.50. Fantastic Four saw some activity with #40 VG+ \$25, #46 (first Black Bolt) VG+ \$23, #52 (first Black Panther) VG+ \$32. Sales were scattered throughout Marvel, with other examples being: Sgt. Fury #6 VG+ \$30.50, #18 VG+ \$16, and Annual #3 VG+ \$7.50; Avengers #58 (origin of the Vision) FN \$13.50; and Tales to Astonish #93 FN \$25.

No Spider-Man sales of note—and we have plenty of Silver Age inventory. Other retailers heed this warning: Hide the Nineties Spider-Man. Tell people they didn't make any for the last ten years. Whatever you do, don't mention the clones, or even try to explain what happened to Mary Jane, or the baby, or... (I should have never shown them where the recent issues were!) Now I understand why Marvel started Ultimate Spider-Man from a fresh beginning. Those are the recent back issues that do sell (without having people asking me what Marvel was thinking).

Greg White

Comics and Collectibles
17 West Monument Ave
Kissimmee, FL 34741
407-870-0400

Welcome to chilly (by our standards) Central Florida. The months of January/February were slow. Back issues had a quiet month. We purchased a few collections this month. Now if only the comics would sell as quickly as I purchase them! I still run into pinheads who ask for **slabbed books**. I tell them to purchase my reasonably priced copies and then send them out to be slabbed themselves. That way I get the sale without selling out the hobby that has been so good to me.

I had a speculator call last month who was interested in a copy of Superman No. 12 double cover from 1942 that I had for sale. This guy asked if I would guarantee my grade against the slabbing company. I told him that if he planned to slab this beautiful double cover book

(what the hell is the sense in owning a Golden Age double cover if you can't open up the book and look at that great inside cover?) he had no business buying it. He still did not understand my point. Duh!! I believe this slabbing hype will die out in a few years and you will have many investors left with books they overpaid for. I relish that day. Slabbing hurts the comic book hobby!

Silver Age: (1956-1969) We recently purchased groups of Marvel and Gold Key.

No DC collections have come in lately. We need to restock on most popular DC titles from this period. Sales were slow last month. There was demand for a few key books but most titles sat. Amazing Spider-Man was one exception—we sold a couple dozen this month!

Recent sales: Star Trek #2 NM \$150; Amazing Spider-Man #1 GD \$600, #3 FN \$50, #14 GD \$75; Batman Annual #3 VF \$150; Wonder Woman #105 GD \$75.

Golden Age: (1935-1955) We purchased a large pre-1950 Disney group of comics. Now I have to get these issues prepared for sale and find homes for most of these books. Many Golden Age still will not sell at full Overstreet. It will be interesting to see how I do with these new additions. Demand continues for origin and first appearance issues. Unrestored high-grade copies of these books very rarely come in. The Overstreet Guide really needs to address the issue of restored Golden Age books...and soon!

Recent Sales: Batman #80 FN \$125; Four Color #62 GD \$75; Human Torch #9 GD \$150; Archie #9 FR \$25; Superman #39 VF \$395.

Toys, Original Art & Disneyana: We purchased a large group of Hanna-Barbera Animation drawings. Nothing exceptional, but it will fill out our selection. Demand continues for Silver Age Marvel and DC art. Not much comes in. A large BLB collection was offered to us last week, however the owner insisted on full retail—a nice group that we had to pass on. Three boxed Haunted Mansion model kits came in along with a nice Lesney Matchbox collection.

Recent Sales: Fred Flintstone animation drawing \$50; Jack Kirby pencil sketch

\$300; Wolfman Aurora still sealed in box \$400; 1947 Superman record set \$150.

That will wrap up our month. When visiting the Walt Disney World area please stop by and say hello.

Joseph Serpico

Classic Comic Investments
www.classiccomicinvestments.com

My personal earliest recollections of **pedigrees** dates back to the San Francisco/Reilly batch. I was around 16 when I heard about this find and had been collecting comics for over eight years already. I had no real concept of grading, all I really understood was low-, mid- and high-grade. No way could I differentiate a VF from a NM, or a Good from a VG-. I just knew I wanted and loved certain books, and was concerned about the price, since I generally had to rely on my own means to fund my purchases.

That reminds me of a time in 1969 when I asked my Dad to purchase a Superman #1 for me. We had actually located a mid-grade copy, and when he saw the asking price of \$300, he replied to the seller, "You must think I am crazy to spend \$300 on a COMIC BOOK!!" I ended up getting an Action #34, around VG+, for Christmas. He paid a more modest \$20 for that comic.

To underscore a point, because I did not have much money, my comic purchases were extremely limited. The San Francisco collection had caused quite a buzz in the hobby, and I had thought (aside from the fact that these were great Golden Age books) what's the big deal? A few years later the Mile High collection was unearthed, and again, I heard about it. By then I was working part time, and attending college, but any extra money I had was earmarked for my night life escapades, which naturally took precedence over comics.

I still collected and read the new releases, and sometimes went after the back issues. I would limit my buys to around \$50 for back issues. Other pedigrees had been discovered and disbursed through the years, and I was always stuck on the sidelines. Finally, in the mid '80s, I bought an Action #30 Mile

THE MARKET

High, paying the princely sum of \$900, the most I had ever spent on a comic. I eagerly awaited the arrival of that book and I was not disappointed. The book was crisp and gleaming. I was hooked, and I knew my paradigm was going to change.

As the years progressed, I gravitated more and more to very high-grades and pedigrees as my primary areas of collecting and investing. Fast forward to the present day. I still collect high-grades and pedigrees, although the price of admission has risen dramatically. So much so, that in many cases, the average "Joe" has no realistic opportunity to purchase one of these beauties.

Which brings me to ask, if you had the option to purchase a **pedigree**, or a **non-pedigree**, same exact grade, both very similar books structurally, same page quality, generally the books are twin brothers, would you be willing to pay another one to three or four times Guide for the pedigree, versus the non-pedigree? And if so, what would be your reasoning to do so? If no, why not?

The advent of CGC has changed many perspectives in our hobby and it seems the value of the same-grade pedigree, as relates to the same-grade non-pedigree is coming under some discussion, especially CGC graded books. There are those who feel that a same-grade pedigree is overpriced. Some say it is scam, it just makes the dealers wealthy. Some say a 9.6 is a 9.6, why a price difference? I am flexible on this issue, as I would take into account the price, age, importance, scarcity and my personal taste before making a decision.

All things considered, I would lean to the pedigree. I like the concept of owning a book which has a lineage, which is part of something grander. I like the fact that someday I could put together a run of books, of like-same quality, from that pedigree, a fascinating feast for the eyes, something to be proud of. And let's be candid, as collectors, isn't it more impressive to say one owns a (fill in the blank) pedigree issue of that book?

From an investor perspective, the pedigree will probably give a better return over time. For me, pedigrees are more akin to a piece of artwork, being

unique, the only one, a book that is most highly desirable. Knowing the origins, I feel a sense of history, a sense of being connected with a pedigree. I think most seasoned collectors feel this way, of course there is no right or wrong here, personal preferences abide. I believe if CBM took a poll, the results would be provocative. The many, various aspects of our hobby is one of the factors that, even after over 35 years of collecting, continue to hold my interest, and deepen my appreciation for this great American art form.

On to the market—anything **Spider-Man** is flying out the window. Can't touch high-grade Spideys right now. As to other in-demand books, it's the usual suspects and same cast of characters. High-grade, especially high-grade CGCs, unrestored main line Golden Age horror, sci-fi, all sell in most grades, if priced accordingly. Romance, crime, humor are a tougher sell, but they too have their audience, they just need to be targeted correctly, and priced fairly.

To digress a little, I am sometimes startled at some of the multiples of Guide some dealers/collectors are asking for some issues. I know we must make a living, but I sense some of them are looking to finance their next home on one sale and/or have very condescending attitudes toward the potential buyers/customers. I guess the reasoning is that the books only keep going up in value, so why rush to sell them. They will be worth more in six months anyway! There is a measure of truth in this, but, one still needs to value their customers. In this market, it is actually more a question of whether it is more profitable to sell sooner at a lower price, or later at a higher price. I find the real challenge is finding good material at a reasonable price, usually the sign of a healthy market!

Here are some **sales results**, all books are CGC unless noted otherwise.

Action #197 6.5 \$129, #225 7.5 \$86; Adventure #380 8.0 \$20; Aquaman #46 9.4 \$122; Batman #128 8.5 \$159, #241 9.4 \$120; Beware #1 9.4 \$112; Brave and the Bold #78 9.2 \$95, #74 9.0 \$24; Daredevil #10 9.2 \$203; Detective #431 9.4 \$38, #164 5.5 \$176; Flash #121 8.0 \$114; Jimmy Olsen #138 9.6 \$89, #90 9.4 \$132; JLA #95 9.0 \$28, #48 9.0 \$51; Our Army

at War #166 9.2 \$102; Richie Rich #107 9.0 \$15; Richie Rich and Casper #1 9.2 \$42; Strange Worlds #9 7.0 \$76; Superboy #113 9.0 \$113; Superman #234 9.2 \$42; #184 9.4 \$220; Unexpected #115 9.2 \$41; Vault of Horror #20 8.0 \$203; Worlds Finest #120 9.2 \$114; X-Men #115 9.6 \$108.

Bob Storms

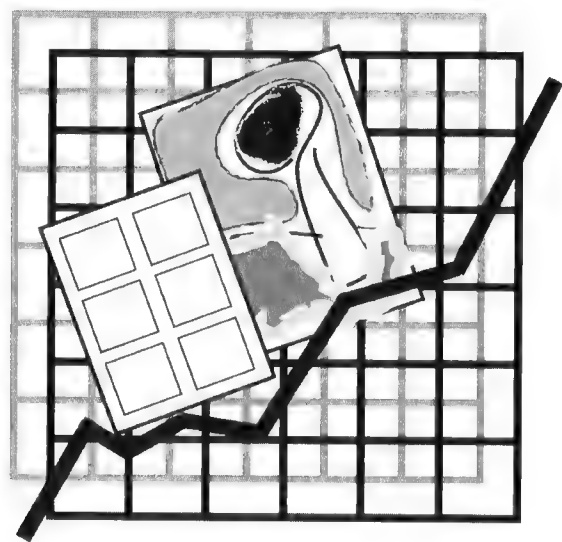
www.highgradedcomics.com

The high-grade market always likes a good movie, an animated cartoon series or artist's death. When the Amazing Spider-Man cartoon first started airing it seemed that Spider-Man sales picked up, the same trend followed when the Fantastic Four and Silver Surfer cartoons aired. Spider-Man has always been the most popular title and the movie hype started months ago. Green Goblin issues are quickly snapped up if they are in high-grade (9.0 or better, CGC graded or not). A small example of recent sales have been ASM #14 CGC 9.2 \$4000, two (2) copies of #15 CGC 9.0 \$950 ea, #40 9.2 \$800, #42 9.2 \$420, #45 9.2 \$225, #47 9.4 \$600, #81 9.4 \$200.

With the passing of **John Buscema** I have suddenly gotten requests for Silver Surfer issues. It's sad to see that you sometimes are only appreciated after you are gone. In general I still feel that the area of strength in the high-grade market is books priced from \$100-\$500. Books over that amount are sometimes based on factors such as the upcoming tax season, economy or boredom. eBay continues to be a very interesting market since they seem to have their hand in my pocket as much as one other company I can think of.

Opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Prices vary by location, date of transaction and other factors.

THE DEAL OF THE ART



Long Live the King!

by Chris Boyko

Jack Kirby. Is there any other name so deservedly linked with and credited for the popularity of the modern comic book? Is there any artist more deserving of the title "King?" Even with all this hyperbole, you can't help but be impressed by the legacy of Jack Kirby.

When Jack died in 1994, he left behind one of the most prolific careers in the comic book industry. No one has dared even estimate the totality of his output, but many thousands of pages of artwork came off his drawing board and into comic book history. What is impressive about Kirby, unlike many of his almost equally prolific contemporaries, is that the consistently high quality of his work means that there appears to be no limit to the demand for it in the comic art market. If a Kirby piece is put up for sale, chances are someone will buy it and often at a price beyond the seller's wildest imagination. One of the factors that likely attracts people to Kirby pieces is that almost all of them came from Kirby himself at one time, as a result of his legal battles that successfully forced the comic companies to return all his artwork to him starting in 1984. So anyone who has a Kirby piece can honestly say it came from his collection! Kirby seems to benefit from the same enormous popularity that

is also accorded to Charles Schulz (*Peanuts*), as both of these artists have a great deal of art available on the open market at any given time, but never seem to saturate it. In fact, both artists have gathered more fans in the wake of their passing and are likely to keep growing in popularity as long as their creations are beloved by so many.

In keeping with this meteoric rise in popularity is a likewise rise in prices! Several recent sales have necessitated the tossing out of all published price estimates for Kirby's work. In some cases, his art is now selling for 2x what it was five years ago, which was 2x what it was five years before that, etc., etc. Whether there is a ceiling for Kirby prices remains to be seen, but the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and their subsequent economic impact do not seem to have diminished the demand for vintage (and not even not-so-vintage) Kirby. Perhaps people need a diversion from reality more than ever and some are turning to the fantastic worlds made possible by Jack Kirby? In any case, all of the prices cited below are taken from completed eBay auctions ending between January and October, 2001. I have not included every Kirby piece sold (like the way-cool specialty piece of Magneto and the band Wings that Jack actually gave to Paul McCartney—\$2500!), but there are more than enough to give some idea of how the Kirby market has been panning out.

Golden/Atom Age Kirby: Rare as Hen's Teeth

Very little material from this period (pre-1959) exists and, consequently, little has been offered for sale,

at least on eBay. No true Golden Age art has turned up, but three pages from *Challengers of the Unknown* #7 (with Wood inks) brought in \$1401-1800 each.

Silver Age Kirby: Big Foot to Big Success

Silver Age Kirby (ca. 1959-1970) always has been, and probably always will be, the most popular of Jack's many eras. This is the period in which he really hit his stride as an artist and developed what we now recognize as his essential style. Starting with the Atlas "Big-Foot" monster titles (*Strange Tales* et al.), mostly inked by Dick Ayers, Jack seemingly effortlessly drew the "Marvel Age of Comics" into being. During this period, he worked with great inkers, such as Vince Colletta and Joe Sinnott, and where he did not have time to pencil, he laid out pages for the likes of Don Heck and Steve Ditko! Like



Why not get two master artists for the price of one? This Kirby/Wood *Challengers of the Unknown* #7 page sold for \$1700 on eBay in July 2001.

THE MARKET

Stephen King, it's hard to imagine that one single person could be quite THAT prolific! Most comic collectors who later morphed into comic art collectors grew up on Silver Kirby and their lust for prime pieces really keeps this the most active part of the market and the area that provides the most surprises when pages come up for sale.

Examples of Silver Age Kirby sold in recent months include: **Amazing Adventures** pages from \$340-1305; **Avengers** pages from \$490-1949 with a page from #1 selling for \$4055 and a cover re-creation for #3 at \$2225!; **Fantastic Four** pages from #9-10 for \$1000-5500, page from #16 for \$1375, pages from #30-42 for \$485-1778, cover re-creation for #39 for \$2000, page from #56 for \$1800, pages from #95-102 for \$1145-2676, splash from #102 for \$5600,

cover for #175 for \$4600; **Journey into Mystery** pages from \$300-961 with a page from #112 (Thor vs. Hulk) selling for \$2550;

Strange Tales #100 page for \$505, #143 page for \$350;

Tales of Suspense #25 page for \$589, pages from #98-99 for \$800-2400;

Tales to Astonish page from #11 for \$850, pages from #44-50 for \$430-843, page from #83 (w/Everett inks) for

\$817; **Thor** pages from \$320-900 with splash from #131 for \$2900, splash from #167 for \$2350, and unpublished cover from #170 for \$4251; **Two-Gun Kid** pages from \$227-455; **X-Men** pages from \$867-2000.

Bronze DC: The 4th World

When Kirby left Marvel in 1970, he was in a huff. This can be seen from his last issues on various titles like **Fantastic Four** (#102) where someone else had to draw the cover surrounding his contents as he left without finishing the books. Early Bronze Kirby (sounds like an awards statue), circa 1971-1975, became the platform from which he produced his first single-vision creations in order to get some of the credit he felt he was cheated out of at Marvel.

Today, his "Fourth World" characters

published by DC are not considered nearly as ground-breaking as his Marvel work, but they were pretty impressive nonetheless. Creations such as the New Gods, Darkseid, and the Demon have since melded into the DC universe, but their spark was pure action-packed Kirby. It must have galled Kirby that DC canceled all his books on editorial whim (Carmine Infantino didn't like them). Say what you will about Marvel and their treatment of Jack regarding creator credits, at least all the books he helped begin for them ran practically forever (or at least until the recent unwise decision to end all the Marvel titles and start numbering them again from #1).

There are lots of Bronze DC Kirby pages on the market and they fall into two categories: 1) nice pages sold for reasonable prices and 2) nice pages for which the seller is asking an amount similar to that expected for an **Avengers** #1 page! Needless to say, those pages in the latter category do not sell. Recent sales include: **Demon** pages from \$177-750 (quite a range!); **Forever People**, two pages for \$1682; **Jimmy Olsen** pages from \$262-599; **Justice, Inc.** #3 cover for \$2000; **Kamandi** pages from \$201-285 and the complete 20 pages from #28 for \$8900; **Mr. Miracle** pages from \$153-832; **New Gods** page for \$600 and two pages from #11 for \$1792; **OMAC** pages from \$175-560; **Sandman** #1 page for \$410.

Bronze Marvel: Homecoming



A pair of great **Captain America** covers for issues #197 & 199 fetched high prices on eBay in August and September 2001: \$6000 and \$5200, respectively.



This action-packed **Tales of Suspense** #98 page with both Cap and the Black Panther (both Kirby creations!) sold for \$2400 on eBay in September 2001.



A rare treat! A Kirby Superman from Jimmy Olsen #147 without his head redrawn by Curt Swan to conform to the "DC standard" appearance! Sold for \$599 on eBay in August 2001.

Art from this period (ca. 1976-1979) probably makes up the bulk of what is available on eBay. This may be due to the release of many pages from stories bought intact from Kirby and later broken up by dealers who would rather cash in some **Devil Dinosaurs** and use the proceeds to buy vintage **Fantastic Four** pages. What I think many people are missing is that, while Jack's writing is/was an acquired taste, his art is actually in top form throughout the 1970s. For the Kirby fan with a limited budget, these 1970s Marvel pages offer classic Kirby style (with more foreshortening than you can shake a stick at) for far less than their 1960s counterparts. But beware of waiting! The prices just keep going up! Price ranges compiled from recent sales include: **2001** pages from \$200-270 with an incredible \$2784 being shelled out for a 2-page spread from issue #2; **Black Panther** pages from \$136-538; **Captain America** pages from \$223-493, covers from \$5200-6000 and a splash from #205 for \$741; **Devil Dinosaur** pages from

\$203-316; **Eternals** pages from \$143-612; **Machine Man** pages from \$455-625 and the cover to #1 for \$3050; **Silver Surfer** trade paperback pages for \$2415-2550; **What If?** pages from #11 (Marvel Bullpen as **Fantastic Four**) for \$305-358 with the splash going for \$1380.

Kirby for Kirby: The Twilight Years

After recapping the earlier stages of Jack's career, it's hard to come to the last phase (ca. 1981-1993). Although he could still draw a mean splash page, his writing became...well, sometimes downright unreadable. His characters all seemed like pale imitations of his earlier ones (Captain Victory is obviously Ikarus of the **Eternals'** long-lost twin) and some of them (notably Parallax the Fighting Fetus) were just too far out there for comic readers. Jack's desire to run his comics as a one-man show was quite noble, and worked fairly well in

the '70s for Marvel and DC, but his work for the smaller companies like Pacific and Topps was clearly not up to his previous quality. If only he could have patched things up with either of the two big publishers, he might have turned out some really great work in his last years.

The market for latter-day Kirby is surprisingly good, considering that no one considers this his best work. Prices are quite modest, and expectations are low, so pages sell most times they are offered. Witness: **Captain Victory** pages for \$104-210; **Satan's Six** splash for \$500; **Silver Star** pages from \$100-250.

Why do so many people want a Jack Kirby piece to call their own? The answer depends on why his style speaks to you, but that it

speaks to many, many people there is no doubt and today's sale prices are ample evidence of his continued popularity. Jack's career was long and filled with classic moments and characters, most of which he created or helped create. Long before the days when comic book artists took matters into their own hands, Jack pioneered the idea of ownership both of characters and original artwork by the artist and not the publisher. Today's comic artists and comic art collectors owe a debt of gratitude to Jack for his efforts and should extend their foreshortened hand in a salute to the King!

Chris Boyko has been collecting comic art, ECs, Silver Age Marvels, and Dick Tracy memorabilia for the past 25 years and is running out of room. He has attended numerous auctions and buys and sells on eBay on a regular basis. He also edited the second edition of The Comic Art Price Guide by Jerry Weist.



The quiet but classic **Fantastic Four** #72 splash sold for as much as action splashes used to! An impressive \$5600 on eBay in August 2001.

GEORGE PEREZ INTERVIEW

[continued from page 49]

recently I have been much more satisfied with most inkers work on me. At CrossGen, I've been very lucky to have almost every inker give me their best, and be faithful to the pencil line. Part of that could be because of my reputation after all these years. Fans know what a [piece of] George Perez artwork should look like, so they hold the inker up to a higher sense of responsibility, because if it doesn't look a certain way, now they're gonna blame the inker.

I was much more bothered by who was inking me when I started, because I had not developed a style that would be recognizable. So, at an early stage in your career, if an inker is doing a disservice to you, that's *all* a fan is gonna see, and it's going to reflect on your pencils as well. They have no idea if the pencils were better—or worse, for that matter—than what they're seeing now. So that's the only thing they can judge you by. So even if I had an inker who was a decent artist, if he was inking it to look like him and less like me, then I'm not making an impact artistically with the fan—he's seeing somebody else's art, not really mine.

So, to answer the question succinctly: Yes. Bothered me a lot earlier, less so now.

CBM: In your typical workday these days, are you essentially spending the same amount of time working as in your earlier years?

Perez: I'm thinking in the early days I didn't worry about trying to be as accurate in my backgrounds, I wasn't as knowledgeable in my anatomy, so it was very easy to work fast because I wasn't as worried about getting it *correct*, I was just worried about getting it *finished*. And the youthful enthusiasm drives you forward quite well.

The biggest problem was when I decided that I couldn't maintain a *career* that way. So youthful enthusiasm had to take a back seat to learning the craft. Obviously, I could still be enthused, but if I wanted to have a career of any lasting importance, I couldn't afford to *fake* everything. And I spent as many hours drawing, but not producing as much work, because it takes a little more effort to get it *right*, as opposed to getting it done. So when I became

reference conscious, when I became more concerned with a certain amount of anatomical accuracy, I started slowing down in my output.

CBM: Do you listen to music while you work?

Perez: Oh, yes. In fact, when you called I was listening to Weird Al Yankovich. I have *all* his albums. And sometimes, when you're feeling just a little bit down, you need something mindless—well, not mindless, he's quite clever—just something upbeat and frivolous to keep you going. Sometimes I'll play hard rock, some oldies, some rhythm and blues. And, of course, there's also some times when I'm just in the mood to hear some good, solid show tunes. Either modern, like *Rent*, or older, like Rodgers and Hammerstein and the like. I have a very broad musical taste, so I'll listen to just about anything.

CBM: You know, one of the things that's become really apparent to me over the years, and particularly while we've been talking today, it really strikes me—and please correct me if I'm wrong here—but I get the feeling that we don't have to worry too much about losing you to films or other media any time soon.

Perez: Oh, no. In fact, I have been offered opportunities in animation, in film storyboarding and film design, which—while I don't know if I'm qualified to do so or not;

I tend to think I'm not, but the fact that I'm offered is flattering—comics is what I do because I sincerely *love* doing it. And there's *nothing*, really, that can tempt me to get away from it. Comics and storytelling is what I do. It's what I enjoy. It's what I'm, as the late Ross Andru complimented with this comment, that I was a *natural* at it. It's something that...[Laughter]...this sounds silly, but I really don't have to put as much effort into being good at. I *work* at my craft every single day, and I try to be better, but the basics of comics is something that is so much a part of my DNA, as it were, that I can't see myself doing anything [else].

My goal in life, as I've said in a number of different interviews, is to die with an unfinished comic book page on my drawing board. And my *next* goal is to make sure that's a long time off! [General laughter]

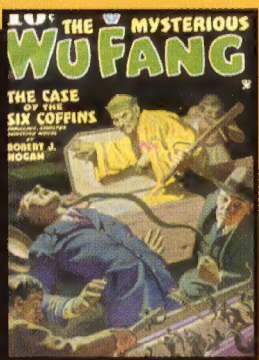




DIAMOND
INTERNATIONAL GALLERIES

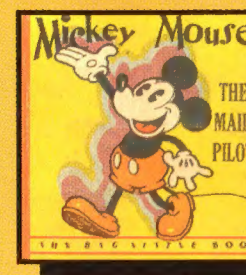


WANTED:

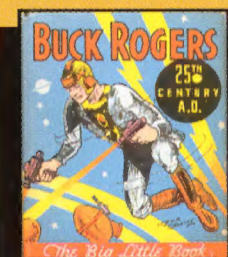


PULPS

BIG LITTLE BOOKS



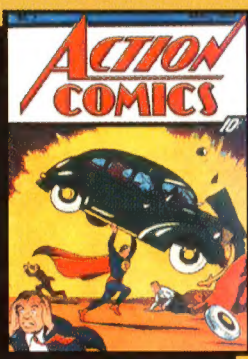
GOLDEN AGE COMICS



We pay the highest prices!

We'll give you top dollar for your **high grade** Pulp, Big Little Book, or Golden Age Comics.

No collection is too large or too small,
and no one pays more!



We Pay Attention to You!

Diamond International Galleries is dedicated to giving you the best deal, backed by unparalleled customer service from one of the industry's most knowledgeable and responsible staffs!

For a quick reply, send us a list of
what you have!



Contact John K. Snyder at
Toll Free (888) 355-9800 ext. 271
Fax (410) 560-7143
E-mail sjohn@diamondgalleries.com

Diamond International Galleries
1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 401
Timonium, MD 21093



FREE COMIC BOOK DAY

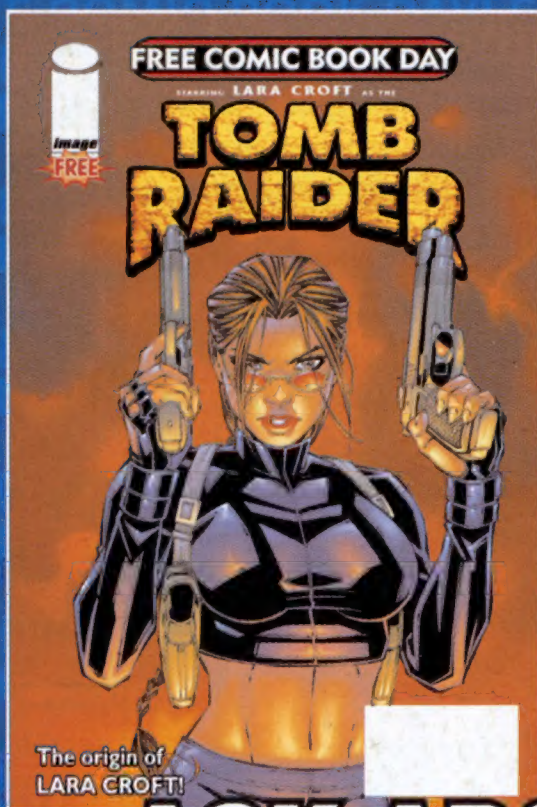
SATURDAY • MAY 4



STAR WARS, © 2002 LUCASFILM LTD. & TM. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. USED UNDER AUTHORIZATION. TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS FOR STAR WARS ARE © 2002 LUCASFILM LTD. DARK HORSE COMICS® AND THE DARK HORSE LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF DARK HORSE COMICS, INC., REGISTERED IN VARIOUS CATEGORIES AND COUNTRIES. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



TM AND © 2002 DC COMICS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



TOMB RAIDER, THE TOMB RAIDER LOGO, LARA CROFT AND HER LIKENESS AND GUNS INTERACTIVE ARE TRADEMARKS OF EIDOS P.L.C. 2002. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



MARVEL AND SPIDER-MAN, TM & © 2002 MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

ASK ABOUT YOUR FREE COMIC BOOK!

TO FIND A PARTICIPATING RETAILER NEAR YOU,

VISIT: WWW.FREECOMICBOOKDAY.COM